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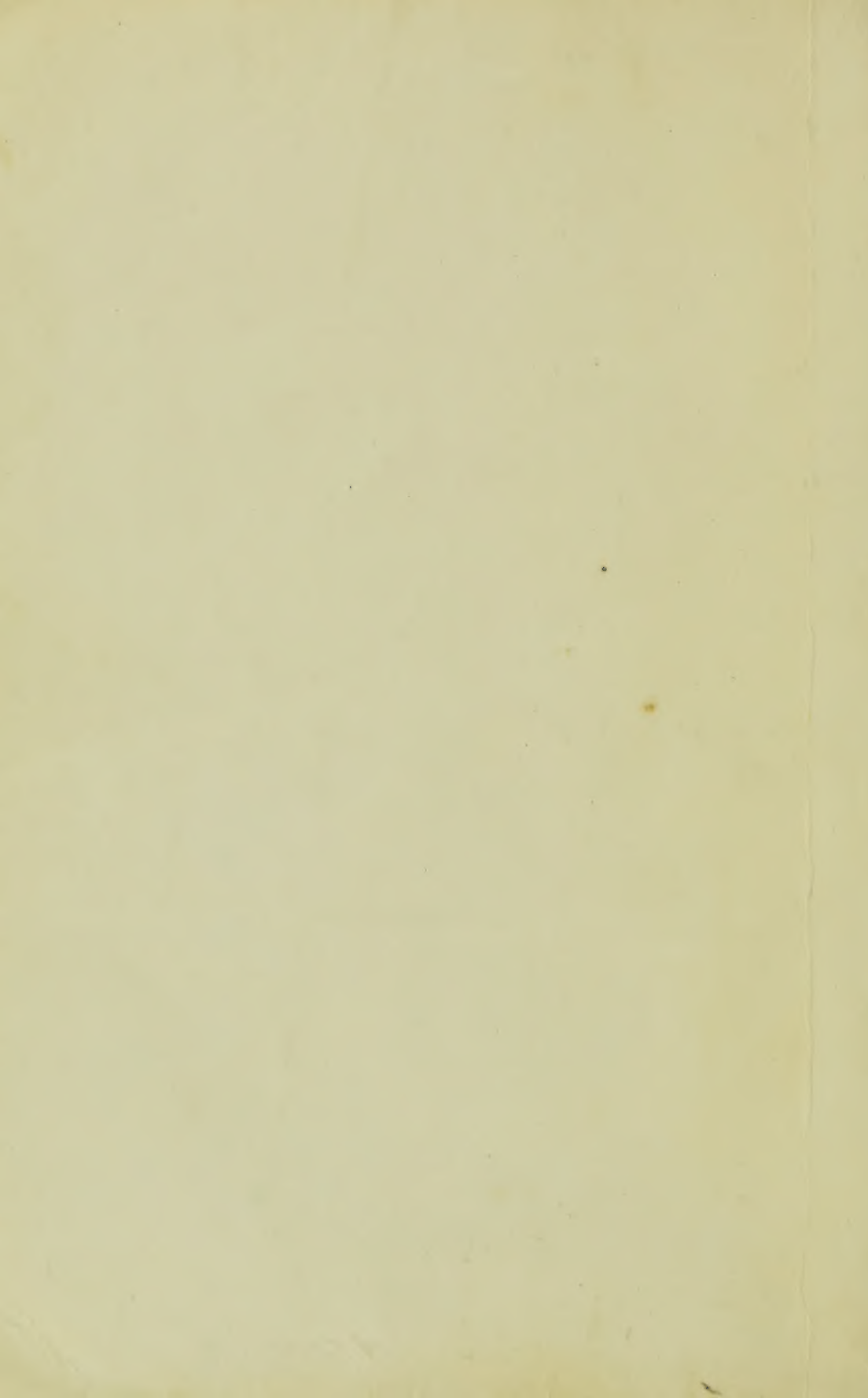
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LITERATURE
• SERIES •

THE
LADY *of* THE LAKE

BY
SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

EDITED WITH NOTES BY
W. A. COWPERTHWAIT, M.A.

W. J. GAGE & CO. LIMITED
TORONTO



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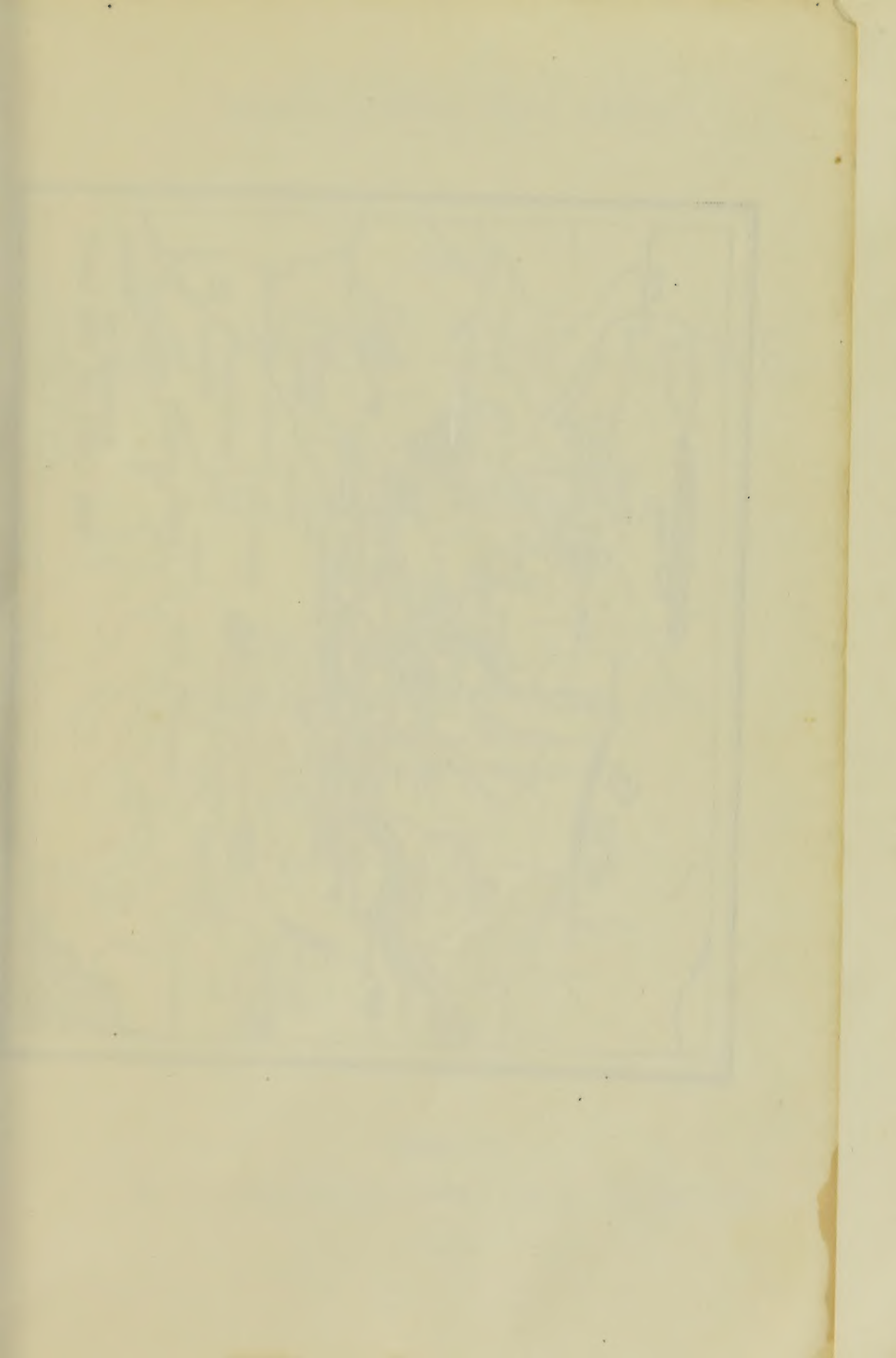
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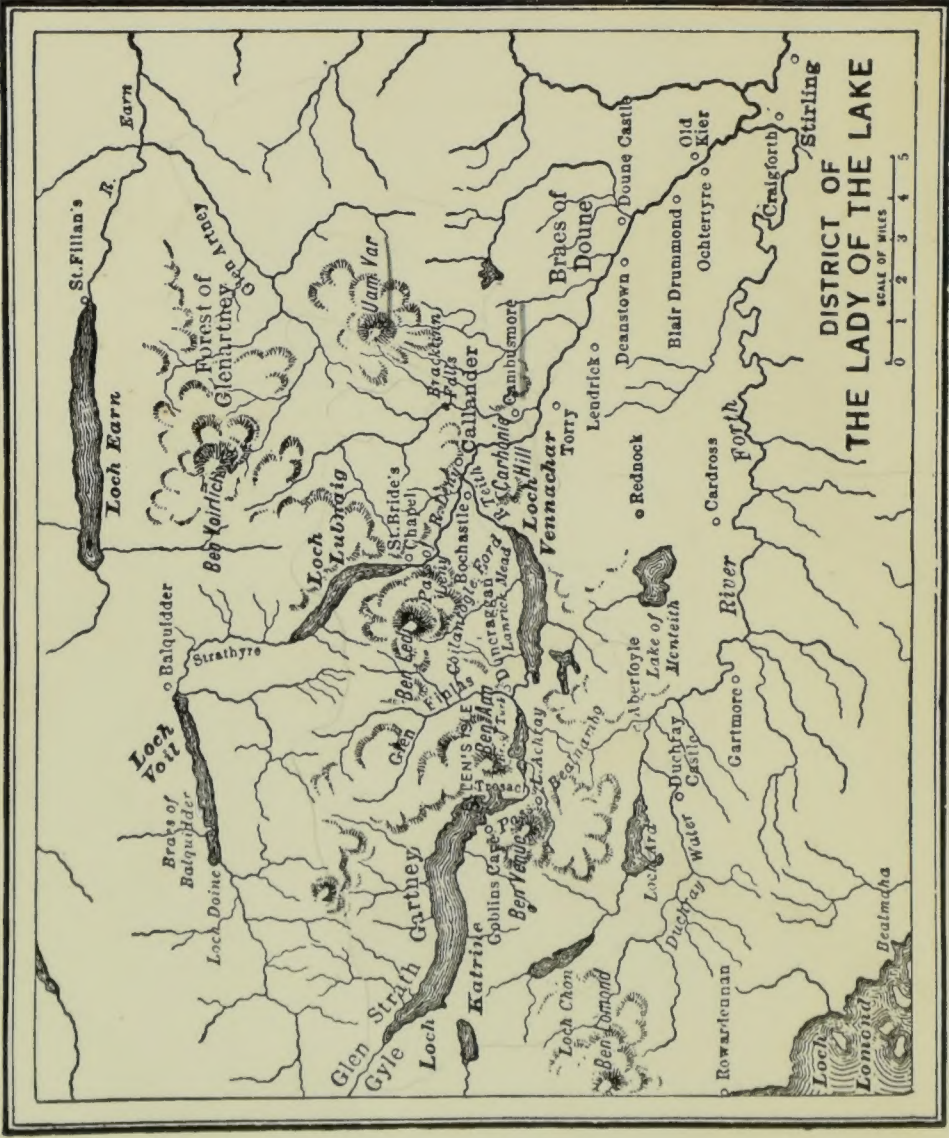
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THE LADY OF THE LAKE

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GAGE'S LITERATURE SERIES

THE
LADY OF THE LAKE

BY
SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY
W. A. COWPERTHWAIT, M.A.

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
NORMAL SCHOOL, WINNIPEG

TORONTO
W. J. GAGE & COMPANY, LIMITED

1939

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INTRODUCTION

Life of Sir Walter Scott. Walter Scott was born at Edinburgh, Scotland, on August 15th, 1771. His father was a writer to the signet, or Scottish attorney, while his mother was a daughter of a professor in the University of Edinburgh. There were twelve children in the family, only five of whom, however, reached maturity. On the father's side, Scott was descended from the well-known Border family of that name, one of his ancestors being Walter Scott of Harden, whom he celebrates in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. His mother was noted for her knowledge of Border ballads and for her skill in reciting them.

When Scott was but eighteen months old, he was attacked by a fever which so affected his right leg that he was permanently lame. He was sent to the home of his grandmother, Sandy-Knowe, near the Tweed River, so that he might have a better chance to recover than he would have in the crowded city. There he rapidly regained his health, and there he acquired that love for the history and ballads of the Border that never left him through life, and of which he made such good use in subsequent years.

At the age of six the boy had sufficiently recovered to return to his home, and in the next year he was sent to the Edinburgh High School. He was a fair scholar, though really more interested in Scottish history and legends than in his text-books. He tells us that he "was never a dunce, but an idle imp who was always longing to do something else than what was assigned him." Be that as it may, no one can read his works without realizing what a vast store of information he possessed.

In 1785 Scott entered Edinburgh University and at the same time began the study of law. He was not a regular attendant at the University, but worked hard at his legal studies, although he had a real dislike for both the study and the practice of his chosen profession. In 1792 he became an advocate. During this period he was not at all well, one very serious illness being caused by the rupture of a blood-vessel, and from this he was a long time recovering. During this period, also, he continued his studies of Scottish history and antiquities, and, although lame and frequently ill, took delight in riding and in long walks—sometimes twenty or thirty miles a day. These excursions gave him an intimate acquaintance with many of the scenes he was afterwards to describe so vividly in his novels and poems.

On Christmas Day, 1797, Scott married Charlotte Margaret Carpenter, a lady of French descent and a very charming woman. Soon afterwards he removed to Lasswade, near Edinburgh, and in 1799, through the influence of the Duke of Buccleuch, received the appointment of sheriff deputy of Selkirkshire. In 1804 another move was made, this time to Ashiestiel, on the Tweed, and two years later he became a clerk of session, although for six years he discharged the duties of the office without salary. His judicial duties were not heavy and left him plenty of leisure for more congenial employment.

Even before his marriage, Scott had been engaged in literary work, his first publication being a translation of Bürger's romantic ballad, *Lenore*. This was followed in 1799 by a translation of Goethe's *Goetz von Berlichingen*, and in 1800 by the *Eve of St. John*. Two years afterwards he gave to the world his great collection of *Border Minstrelsy*, gathered for the most part by himself from the peasants whom he met in his frequent excursions throughout the country.

The publication of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* in 1805 brought Scott fame and general recognition through

both Scotland and England. In 1808 *Marmion* appeared, strengthening the favour with which the poet was received by the public. The *Lady of the Lake*, published in 1810, proved quite as popular as its predecessors. But not alone poetry was engaging Scott's attention. He was a frequent contributor to the leading magazines and found time also to write long biographies of Dryden and Swift. Part of the year he spent in Edinburgh, attending to his legal and other duties and in writing.

In 1811 Scott purchased the estate of Abbotsford, on the Tweed, and in May, 1812, with his family, took up his residence. Here he kept open house for friends and visitors, playing the part of a Scottish laird as he alone could. His chief amusements at this time were riding, following the hounds, "burning the water," or salmon-spearing by torchlight, in the course of which he received many a ducking. All through his life he was very fond of horses and dogs. It is told of him, that, when Camp, a favourite dog, died, he wrote to decline an invitation to dinner, saying he could not accept "because of the death of a dear old friend."

After *The Lady of the Lake* three long poems followed one another in rapid succession, *Don Roderick*, *Rokeby*, and *The Bridal of Triermain*, but the great success of Byron's *Childe Harold* rather induced Scott to abandon the writing of poetry. Three long poems, indeed, were written later—*The Lord of the Isles*, *Waterloo*, and *Harold the Dauntless*—but they have not the sprightliness and vigour of the earlier productions.

But now the poet was to give place to the novelist. One day, while hunting through some fishing tackle, Scott came across a manuscript of a novel he had commenced nine years before, but had thrown aside. The humour seized him to finish it. He completed the task in three weeks, publishing the book in 1814, under the title *Waverley*, but with no name attached. The success of the novel was instantaneous. The public fancy was

caught even more by the novelist than by the poet, and the insistent demand was for more. Novel after novel poured from his pen, including *Guy Mannering*, *The Antiquary*, *Rob Roy*, *Ivanhoe*, *The Heart of Midlothian*, *The Talisman*, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, *Quentin Durward*, and many others, now so famous under the general title of *The Waverley Novels*.

In 1813 Scott had declined the office of Poet Laureate, but in 1821 he accepted a baronetcy at the hands of the King, and was henceforth known as Sir Walter. His life at this time flowed easily. An assured literary position, a handsome income, a comfortable estate, troops of friends and admirers—everything seemed to promise a happy and pleasant old age, when in 1826 the crash came.

As early as 1806 Scott had invested a considerable sum in the printing business of the Ballantyne Brothers, and later brought that firm into connection with Constable, his publisher. Both firms failed, and Scott, as a silent partner, found himself responsible for an indebtedness of £117,000, nearly \$600,000. At the age of fifty-five the undaunted Scottish gentleman set himself to the task of discharging this debt. He might have made an arrangement with his creditors, but this he refused to do. He declared, and he meant it when he said it: "Nobody in the end can lose a penny by me." He gave up for a time Abbotsford, and all his pleasant habits. His wife had died in the previous year. Resolutely he toiled at his gigantic labour, and nobly did the public support him. His first novel published after the disaster, *Woodstock*, yielded £8,000, and his *Life of Napoleon* over £18,000. One novel followed another. But the struggle was too much. By the time that he had paid off £40,000 his health was weakening. Early in 1831 he suffered a paralytic stroke, and shortly afterwards he was compelled to give up work. He spent the winter of 1831-32 on the Continent, but in the spring returned to Abbotsford. He lingered for a while and died at his beloved

home on September 21st, 1832. He was buried with his ancestors in Dryburgh Abbey. It is pleasant to know that although he did not succeed in paying off his indebtedness during his lifetime, the sale of his books after his death yielded sufficient to discharge the entire debt with interest. Not a stain remained upon his name. "He paid the penalty of health and life, but saved his honour and self-respect."

A recent writer says: "'The great magician,' 'the wizard of the North'—the two names so frequently given to Scott—call to mind immediately his power of conjuring with the song and story of the past. No picture of him is complete, however, until he is shown as the great-hearted laird of Abbotsford. Among his contemporaries he was frequently surpassed in poetry; he clearly excelled only in his novels. But as a man of a big, warm heart, he had no rival, scarcely a second. He always contrived to find the best side of a friend or enemy; he knew how to forget injuries; his heart and his purse went together to the poor; his dependents, his family, his friends, even strangers—who always found the hospitable doors of Abbotsford open to them—returned his affection as if it were his undoubted right. Even many creditors, in the hour of his trial, joined the ranks of his loving admirers. So great, indeed, was the power of love in the man that generations of Scotsmen have looked to him with undoubting filial affection; and to that great family have long since been added thousands and tens of thousands wherever English is spoken or read."

The Lady of the Lake. The poem, published in 1810, has from the first been deservedly popular. While most critics are of the opinion that it is inferior in poetic qualities to *Marmion* and *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, there is no doubt that it has been more widely read, and the causes are not far to seek. Scott himself says that its writing was "a labour of love." The scenes described

were familiar to him, for as a youth he had rambled over them on foot, and one great charm, especially to the lover of nature, is the splendid descriptive passages.

Again, the story of the poem is simply told in rhymed couplets well adapted for purposes of rapid narration. The story itself is of intense interest. Beginning with a stag-hunt, described with a vigour characteristic of Scott, the poem introduces an element of mystery as to the personality of Fitz-James. The meeting of the Knight of Snowdoun and Ellen Douglas adds a romantic touch. Then the poet opens up a veritable mine of treasures—ancient customs of Scotland, the feuds between Highlander and Lowlander, the Fiery Cross with all its picturesque details, and the Taghairm. The unexpected meeting of Fitz-James with Roderick Dhu and their duel later are depicted with dramatic effect. The spirited description of the Battle of Beal' an Duine, the arrival of Ellen at Stirling, the discovery of the identity of Fitz-James, the romantic ending, all combine to make *The Lady of the Lake* a splendid narrative poem for young students.

One must not fail, however, to make reference to the admirable songs scattered throughout the poem, songs which are known wherever the English tongue is spoken.

The poem contains all the elements which should make it attractive to students, a lovely heroine, a mysterious knight, beautiful descriptions, stirring battle scenes, an insight into ancient manners and customs—all touched with the magic pen of a great writer.

The Scene of the Poem. Anderson, in his *Guide to the Highlands*, thus describes the scene of the poem: "The mountain range, which forms the outskirts of the Highlands, runs for several miles due west from Callander and then deflects to the south, towards Ben Lomond. Lochs Achray and Vennachar, into which the waters of Loch Katrine discharge themselves, lie on the outside of the Highland boundary; while the latter is encompassed

by mountains, through which a communication has been formed between Lochs Katrine and Achray by some great convulsion of Nature, sweeping away the connecting link between Benan and Ben Venue. These mountains, that,

————— like giants stand,
To sentinel enchanted land,

present on each side lofty and inaccessible precipices; and the intermediate pass, known as the Trosachs, or 'bristled territory,' in Gaelic etymology, is occupied by intricate groups of rocky and wooded eminences; on the south sides of Lochs Vennachar and Achray rise heathery hills, the bases of which are fringed with oak coppice. Benledi, the Hill of God, towers on the north. The range which connects it with Benan, swells out unequally; at times sending down ragged heights clad with dense foliage, which overhang the edge of the water in steep acclivities, and enclose between them plots of open uneven ground. Loch Vennachar is four miles long, and three-quarters of a mile across, at the broadest part; Loch Achray, a mile and a half long, and its greatest width one mile. Both of them narrow towards the east end. From Callander to Coilantogleford, at the lower point of Loch Vennachar, where Roderick Dhu was overcome by Fitz-James, is about two and a half miles; the space between that lake and Loch Achray about half a mile, and from the western extremity of the latter to Loch Katrine one mile; making the whole distance from nine to ten miles. Lanrick Mead, the mustering-place of Clan Alpine, lies on the north side of Loch Vennachar, where the road diverges from the lake: a little way on, on the face of the hill towards the right, is the farm of Duncraggan. The Brigg of Turk crosses the water, which, descending from Glenfinlas, joins the Teith between Lochs Vennachar and Achray."

The Historical Background of the Poem. Dr. Frederick Henry Sykes in his edition of *The Lady of the Lake* sets

out the historic background of the action: "To give vraisemblance to the poem, Scott has intermingled historical with imaginary personages and real events with fictitious incidents.

"The poem is one of the time of James V of Scotland (1512-1542), whose minority, on the death of James IV at Flodden, exposed the kingdom to all the evils born of a regency and a turbulent feudal society. The Queen Dowager was the first regent, but on her marriage with Archibald Douglas, sixth Earl of Angus (1489-1557), the most powerful noble of his time, it was thought safest to place the regency in the hands of John Stewart, Duke of Albany. Albany went to France in 1524, and Angus was made Regent, and ruled the land with severity and probably with justice. The King was his instrument and was held prisoner by him until 1528, when James escaped, forbade 'Angus or any Douglas to come within seven miles of the royal person,' then met Parliament, outlawed Angus, his brother, and uncle, pronounced them rebels and declared their estates forfeited. That uncle was Archibald Douglas of Kilspindie, the friend of James' boyhood, and High-Treasurer. For fifteen years Angus was in exile, making at times hostile incursions from across the border, but not returning to Scotland till the King's death. James was but sixteen when he freed himself from Angus. He had to overcome powerful opposition from the nobles, to quell the disorder of the Highlands, and to meet the intrigues of Henry VIII of England. In 1536 he visited France and was married right royally in Paris, in 1537, to the eldest daughter of Francis I. His second wife was Mary of Guise. He was called the 'King of the Commons', not only because he protected them, but also because he loved to mix with them in disguise, under the name of the Gudemane of Ballengeich. He was a man of good looks, good wit, licentious, it is true, yet a protector of the poor, and a vigorous and not unsuccessful ruler in times of great

national insecurity. The King died in 1542, stricken by the disgrace of Solway Moss, leaving an only child, Mary of Scots. The time of the poem may be deduced from these incidents and certain lines of the text to be about 1540.

“The poem involves the enmity existing between the settled country of the Lowlands and the border clans of semi-civilized Highlanders, recognizing little authority but that of their chiefs, and united in regarding the Saxon—the Lowlander—as lawful prey. These border clans are as follows: Beginning at the western shore of Loch Lomond, we find the Colquhouns and the MacFarlanes. On the east shore are the Buchanans, and, above them, and extending on both sides of the west end of Loch Katrine to the Braes of Balquidder, the Macgregors, the chief branch of Clan-Alpine. To the south of Katrine, extending northeast along the Teith to Loch Earn, are the Grahams, the Stewarts, and Drummonds. Scott, to justify his picture of the times, quotes as follows: ‘In former times, those parts of this district, which are situated beyond the Grampian range, were rendered almost inaccessible by strong barriers of rocks, and mountains, and lakes. It was a border country, and though on the very verge of the low country, it was almost totally sequestered from the world, and, as it were, insulated with respect to society. ’Tis well known that in the Highlands it was, in former times, accounted not only lawful, but honourable, among hostile tribes, to commit depredations on one another; and these habits of the age were perhaps strengthened in this district by the circumstances which have been mentioned. It bordered on a country, the inhabitants of which, while they were richer, were less warlike than they, and widely differed by language and manners.’ The poem, therefore, fairly represents the actual conditions of the border line of Highland and Lowland about 1540.

“Against a suggested background of history the poet

set his characters—King James, Lennox, Moray, Mar, more or less historical, and then created and added the purely fictitious ones, which are indeed those by which the action is alone able to proceed—Douglas of Bothwell, Ellen Douglas, Roderick Dhu, the Græme, etc. Similarly the condition of the times afforded opportunity for the invention of fictitious incidents—the single combat, the ride, the exploits and pardon of the Douglas, the betrothal of Ellen and the Græme. These inventions, moulded with the aim of picturesque, romantic effect, are the essential poem, from the point of view of character as well as of plot. The poem is essentially a romance in verse, having, however, some suggestive pictures of the times, and many careful studies of the scenery in which the incidents take place.”

THE LADY OF THE LAKE

CANTO FIRST

THE CHASE

Harp of the North! that mouldering long hast hung
On the witch-elm that shades Saint Fillan's spring,
And down the fitful breeze thy numbers flung,
Till envious ivy did around thee cling,
Muffling with verdant ringlet every string—
O Minstrel Harp, still must thine accents sleep?
Mid rustling leaves and fountains murmuring,
Still must thy sweeter sounds their silence keep,
Nor bid a warrior smile, nor teach a maid to weep?

Not thus, in ancient days of Caledon, 10
Was thy voice mute amid the festal crowd,
When lay of hopeless love, or glory won,
Aroused the fearful or subdued the proud.
At each according pause was heard aloud
Thine ardent symphony sublime and high!
Fair dames and crested chiefs attention bowed;
For still the burden of thy minstrelsy
Was Knighthood's dauntless deed, and Beauty's match-
less eye.

O, wake once more! how rude soe'er the hand 20
That ventures o'er thy magic maze to stray;
O, wake once more! though scarce my skill command
Some feeble echoing of thine earlier lay:
Though harsh and faint, and soon to die away,

And all unworthy of thy nobler strain,
Yet if one heart throb higher at its sway,
The wizard note has not been touched in vain.
Then silent be no more! Enchantress, wake again!

I

The stag at eve had drunk his fill,
Where danced the moon on Monan's rill,
And deep his midnight lair had made
In lone Glenartney's hazel shade;
But when the sun his beacon red
Had kindled on Benvoirlich's head,
The deep-mouthed bloodhound's heavy bay
Resounded up the rocky way,
And faint, from farther distance borne,
Were heard the clanging hoof and horn.

II

As Chief, who hears his warder call,
"To arms! the foemen storm the wall,"
The antlered monarch of the waste
Sprung from his heathery couch in haste.
But ere his fleet career he took,
The dew-drops from his flanks he shook;
Like crested leader proud and high
Tossed his beamed frontlet to the sky;
A moment gazed adown the dale,
A moment snuffed the tainted gale,
A moment listened to the cry,
That thickened as the chase drew nigh;
Then, as the headmost foes appeared,
With one brave bound the copse he cleared,
And, stretching forward free and far,
Sought the wild heaths of Uam-Var.

III

Yelled on the view the opening pack;
 Rock, glen, and cavern paid them back;
 To many a mingled sound at once
 The awakened mountain gave response.
 A hundred dogs bayed deep and strong,
 Clattered a hundred steeds along,
 Their peal the merry horns rung out, 60
 A hundred voices joined the shout;
 With hark and whoop and wild halloo,
 No rest Benvoirlich's echoes knew.
 Far from the tumult fled the roe,
 Close in her covert cowered the doe,
 The falcon, from her cairn on high,
 Cast on the rout a wondering eye,
 Till far beyond her piercing ken
 The hurricane had swept the glen. 70
 Faint, and more faint, its failing din
 Returned from cavern, cliff, and linn,
 And silence settled, wide and still,
 On the lone wood and mighty hill. 80

IV

Less loud the sounds of sylvan war
 Disturbed the heights of Uam-Var,
 And roused the cavern where, 'tis told,
 A giant made his den of old;
 For ere that steep ascent was won,
 High in his pathway hung the sun,
 And many a gallant, stayed perforce, 80
 Was fain to breathe his faltering horse,
 And of the trackers of the deer
 Scarce half the lessening pack was near;
 So shrewdly on the mountain-side
 Had the bold burst their mettle tried.

V

The noble stag was pausing now
 Upon the mountain's southern brow,
 Where broad extended, far beneath,
 The varied realms of fair Menteith.
 With anxious eye he wandered o'er
 Mountain and meadow, moss and moor,
 And pondered refuge from his toil,
 By far Lochard or Aberfoyle.
 But nearer was the copsewood gray
 That waved and wept on Loch Achray,
 And mingled with the pine-trees blue
 On the bold cliffs of Benvenue.
 Fresh vigour with the hope returned,
 With flying foot the heath he spurned,
 Held westward with unwearied race,
 And left behind the panting chase.

90

100

VI

'Twere long to tell what steeds gave o'er,
 As swept the hunt through Cambus-more;
 What reins were tightened in despair,
 When rose Benledi's ridge in air;
 Who flagged upon Bochart's heath,
 Who shunned to stem the flooded Teith,—
 For twice that day, from shore to shore,
 The gallant stag swam stoutly o'er.
 Few were the stragglers, following far,
 That reached the lake of Vennachar;
 And when the Brigg of Turk was won,
 The headmost horseman rode alone.

110

VII

Alone, but with unbated zeal,
 That horseman plied the scourge and steel;
 For jaded now, and spent with toil,

Embossed with foam, and dark with soil,
While every gasp with sobs he drew,
The labouring stag strained full in view.
Two dogs of black Saint Hubert's breed, *120*
Unmatched for courage, breath, and speed,
Fast on his flying traces came,
And all but won that desperate game;
For, scarce a spear's length from his haunch,
Vindictive toiled the bloodhounds stanch; *130*
Nor nearer might the dogs attain,
Nor farther might the quarry strain.
Thus up the margin of the lake,
Between the precipice and brake, *130*
O'er stock and rock their race they take.

VIII

The Hunter marked that mountain high,
The lone lake's western boundary,
And deemed the stag must turn to bay,
Where that huge rampart barred the way; *140*
Already glorying in the prize,
Measured his antlers with his eyes;
For the death-wound and death-halloo
Mustered his breath, his whinyard drew:—
But thundering as he came prepared,
With ready arm and weapon bared,
The wily quarry shunned the shock,
And turned him from the opposing rock;
Then, dashing down a darksome glen,
Soon lost to hound and Hunter's ken,
In the deep Trosachs' wildest nook
His solitary refuge took.
There, while close couched the thicket shed
Cold dews and wild flowers on his head,
He heard the baffled dogs in vain
Rave through the hollow pass amain, *150*
Chiding the rocks that yelled again.

IX

Close on the hounds the Hunter came,
To cheer them on the vanished game;
But, stumbling in the rugged dell,
The gallant horse exhausted fell.
The impatient rider strove in vain
To rouse him with the spur and rein,
For the good steed, his labours o'er,
Stretched his stiff limbs, to rise no more;
Then, touched with pity and remorse, 160
He sorrowed o'er the expiring horse.
"I little thought, when first thy rein
I slacked upon the banks of Seine,
That Highland eagle e'er should feed
On thy fleet limbs, my matchless steed!
Woe worth the chase, woe worth the day,
That costs thy life, my gallant gray!"

X

Then through the dell his horn resounds,
From vain pursuit to call the hounds.
Back limped, with slow and crippled pace, 170
The sulky leaders of the chase;
Close to their master's side they pressed,
With drooping tail and humbled crest;
But still the dingle's hollow throat
Prolonged the swelling bugle-note.
The owlets started from their dream,
The eagles answered with their scream,
Round and around the sounds were cast,
Till echo seemed an answering blast;
And on the Hunter hied his way, 180
To join some comrades of the day,
Yet often paused, so strange the road,
So wondrous were the scenes it showed.

XI

The western waves of ebbing day
Rolled o'er the glen their level way;
Each purple peak, each flinty spire, *rearing*,
Was bathed in floods of living fire.
But not a setting beam could glow
Within the dark ravines below,
Where twined the path in shadow hid, 190
Round many a rocky pyramid,
Shooting abruptly from the dell
Its thunder-splintered pinnacle;
Round many an insulated mass,
The native bulwarks of the pass,
Huge as the tower which builders vain
Presumptuous piled on Shinar's plain.
The rocky summits, split and rent,
Formed turret, dome, or battlement, 200
Or seemed fantastically set
With cupola or minaret,
Wild crests as pagod ever decked,
Or mosque of Eastern architect.
Nor were these earth-born castles bare,
Nor lacked they many a banner fair;
For, from their shivered brows displayed,
Far o'er the unfathomable glade,
All twinkling with the dewdrop sheen,
The brier-rose fell in streamers green,
And creeping shrubs of thousand dyes 210
Waved in the west-wind's summer sighs.

XII

Boon nature scattered, free and wild,
Each plant or flower, the mountain's child.
Here eglantine embalmed the air,
Hawthorn and hazel mingled there;
The primrose pale and violet flower

Found in each clift a narrow bower ;
Foxglove and nightshade, side by side,
Emblems of punishment and pride,
Grouped their dark hues with every stain 220
The weather-beaten crags retain.
With boughs that quaked at every breath,
Gray birch and aspen wept beneath ;
Aloft, the ash and warrior oak
Cast anchor in the rifted rock ;
And, higher yet, the pine-tree hung
His shattered trunk, and frequent flung,
Where seemed the cliffs to meet on high,
His boughs athwart the narrowed sky.
Highest of all, where white peaks glanced, 230
Where glistening streamers waved and danced,
The wanderer's eye could barely view
The summer heaven's delicious blue ;
So wondrous wild, the whole might seem
The scenery of a fairy dream.

XIII

Onward, amid the copse 'gan peep
A narrow inlet, still and deep,
Affording scarce such breadth of brim
As served the wild duck's brood to swim.
Lost for a space, through thickets veering, 240
But broader when again appearing,
Tall rocks and tufted knolls their face
Could on the dark-blue mirror trace ;
And farther as the Hunter strayed,
Still broader sweep its channels made.
The shaggy mounds no longer stood,
Emerging from entangled wood,
But, wave-encircled, seemed to float,
Like castle girdled with its moat ;
Yet broader floods extending still 250

Divide them from their parent hill,
Till each, retiring, claims to be
An islet in an inland sea.

XIV

And now, to issue from the glen,
No pathway meets the wanderer's ken,
Unless he climb with footing nice
A far-projecting precipice.
The broom's tough roots his ladder made,
The hazel saplings lent their aid;
And thus an airy point he won, 260
Where, gleaming with the setting sun,
One burnished sheet of living gold,
Loch Katrine lay beneath him rolled,
In all her length far winding lay,
With promontory, creek, and bay,
And islands that, empurpled bright,
Floated amid the livelier light,
And mountains that like giants stand
To sentinel enchanted land.
High on the south, huge Benvenue 270
Down to the lake in masses threw
Crag, knoll, and mound, confusedly hurled,
The fragments of an earlier world;
A wildering forest feathered o'er
His ruined sides and summit hoar,
While on the north, through middle air,
Ben-an heaved high his forehead bare.

XV

From the steep promontory gazed
The stranger, raptured and amazed,
And, "what a scene were here," he cried, 280
"For princely pomp or churchman's pride!

On this bold brow, a lordly tower;
 In that soft vale, a lady's bower;
 On yonder meadow far away,
 The turrets of a cloister gray;
 How blithely might the bugle-horn
 Chide on the lake the lingering morn!
 How sweet at eve the lover's lute
 Chime when the groves were still and mute!
 And when the midnight moon should lave 290
 Her forehead in the silver wave,
 How solemn on the ear would come
 The holy matins' distant hum,
 While the deep peal's commanding tone
 Should wake, in yonder islet lone,
 A sainted hermit from his cell,
 To drop a bead with every knell!
 And bugle, lute, and bell, and all,
 Should each bewildered stranger call
 To friendly feast and lighted hall. 300

XVI

"Blithe were it then to wander here!
 But now—beshrew yon nimble deer—
 Like that same hermit's, thin and spare,
 The copse must give my evening fare;
 Some mossy bank my couch must be,
 Some rustling oak my canopy.
 Yet pass we that; the war and chase
 Give little choice of resting-place;—
 A summer night in greenwood spent 310
 Were but to-morrow's merriment:
 But hosts may in these wilds abound,
 Such as are better missed than found;
 To meet with Highland plunderers here
 Were worse than loss of steed or deer.—

I am alone;—my bugle-strain
 May call some straggler of the train;
 Or, fall the worst that may betide,
 Ere now this falchion has been tried.”

XVII

But scarce again his horn he wound,
 When lo! forth starting at the sound, 320
 From underneath an aged oak
 That slanted from the islet rock,
 A damsel guider of its way,
 A little skiff shot to the bay,
 That round the promontory steep
 Led its deep line in graceful sweep,
 Eddying, in almost viewless wave,
 The weeping willow twig to lave,
 And kiss, with whispering sound and slow,
 The beach of pebbles bright as snow. 330
 The boat had touched this silver strand
 Just as the Hunter left his stand,
 And stood concealed amid the brake,
 To view this Lady of the Lake.
 The maiden paused, as if again
 She thought to catch the distant strain.
 With head upraised, and look intent,
 And eye and ear attentive bent,
 And locks flung back, and lips apart,
 Like monument of Grecian art, 340
 In listening mood, she seemed to stand,
 The guardian Naiad of the strand.

XVIII

And ne'er did Grecian chisel trace
 A Nymph, a Naiad, or a Grace,
 Of finer form or lovelier face!
 What though the sun, with ardent frown,

Had slightly tinged her cheek with brown,—
 The sportive toil, which, short and light,
 Had dyed her glowing hue so bright,
 Served too in hastier swell to show 350
 —Short glimpses of a breast of snow:
 What though no rule of courtly grace
 To measured mood had trained her pace,—
 A foot more light, a step more true,
 Ne'er from the heath-flower dashed the dew;
 E'en the slight harebell raised its head,
 Elastic from her airy tread:
 What though upon her speech there hung
 The accents of the mountain tongue,—
 Those silver sounds, so soft, so dear, 360
 The listener held his breath to hear!

XIX

A chieftain's daughter seemed the maid;
 Her satin snood, her silken plaid,
 Her golden brooch, such birth betrayed.
 And seldom was a snood amid
 Such wild luxuriant ringlets hid,
 Whose glossy black to shame might bring
 The plumage of the raven's wing;
 And seldom o'er a breast so fair
 Mantled a plaid with modest care, 370
 And never brooch the folds combined
 Above a heart more good and kind.
 Her kindness and her worth to spy,
 You need but gaze on Ellen's eye;
 Not Katrine in her mirror blue
 Gives back the shaggy banks more true,
 Than every free-born glance confessed
 The guileless movements of her breast;
 Whether joy danced in her dark eye,
 Or woe or pity claimed a sigh, 380

Or filial love was glowing there,
Or meek devotion poured a prayer,
Or tale of injury called forth
The indignant spirit of the North.
One only passion unrevealed
With maiden pride the maid concealed,
Yet not less purely felt the flame;—
O, need I tell that passion's name?

XX

Impatient of the silent horn,
Now on the gale her voice was borne:— 390
“Father!” she cried; the rocks around
Loved to prolong the gentle sound.
Awhile she paused, no answer came;—
“Malcolm, was thine the blast?” the name
Less resolutely uttered fell,
The echoes could not catch the swell.
“A stranger I,” the Huntsman said,
Advancing from the hazel shade.
The maid, alarmed, with hasty oar 400
Pushed her light shallop from the shore,
And when a space was gained between,
Closer she drew her bosom's screen;—
So forth the startled swan would swing,
So turn to prune his ruffled wing.
Then safe, though fluttered and amazed,
She paused, and on the stranger gazed.
Not his the form, nor his the eye,
That youthful maidens wont to fly. *

XXI

On his bold visage middle age
Had slightly pressed its signet sage, 410
Yet had not quenched the open truth
And fiery vehemence of youth;

Forward and frolic glee was there,
The will to do, the soul to dare,
The sparkling glance, soon blown to fire,
Of hasty love or headlong ire.
His limbs were cast in manly mould
For hardy sports or contest bold;
And though in peaceful garb arrayed,
And weaponless except his blade, 420
His stately mien as well implied
A high-born heart, a martial pride,
As if a baron's crest he wore,
And sheathed in armour trode the shore.
Slighting the petty need he showed,
He told of his benighted road;
His ready speech flowed fair and free,
In phrase of gentlest courtesy,
Yet seemed that tone and gesture bland
Less used to sue than to command. 430

XXII

Awhile the maid the stranger eyed,
And, reassured, at length replied,
That Highland halls were open still
To wildered wanderers of the hill.
"Nor think you unexpected come
To yon lone isle, our desert home;
Before the heath had lost the dew,
This morn, a couch was pulled for you;
On yonder mountain's purple head 440
Have ptarmigan and heath-cock bled,
And our broad nets have swept the mere,
To furnish forth your evening cheer."—
"Now, by the rood, my lovely maid,
Your courtesy has erred," he said;
"No right have I to claim, misplaced,
The welcome of expected guest.

A wanderer, here by fortune tost,
My way, my friends, my courser lost,
I ne'er before, believe me, fair,
Have ever drawn your mountain air, 450
Till on this lake's romantic strand
I found a fay in fairy land!"—

XXIII

"I well believe," the maid replied,
As her light skiff approached the side,—
"I well believe, that ne'er before
Your foot has trod Loch Katrine's shore;
But yet, as far as yesternight,
Old Allan-bane foretold your plight,—
A gray-haired sire, whose eye intent
Was on the visioned future bent. 460
He saw your steed, a dappled gray,
Lie dead beneath the birchen way;
Painted exact your form and mien,
Your hunting-suit of Lincoln green,
That tasselled horn so gayly gilt,
That falchion's crooked blade and hilt,
That cap with heron plumage trim,
And yon two hounds so dark and grim.
He bade that all should ready be
To grace a guest of fair degree; 470
But light I held his prophecy,
And deemed it was my father's horn
Whose echoes o'er the lake were borne."

XXIV

The stranger smiled:—"Since to your home
A destined errant-knight I come,
Announced by prophet sooth and old,
Doomed, doubtless, for achievement bold,
I'll lightly front each high emprise

For one kind glance of those bright eyes.
Permit me first the task to guide
Your fairy frigate o'er the tide." 480
The maid, with smile suppressed and sly,
The toil unwonted saw him try;
For seldom, sure, if e'er before,
His noble hand had grasped an oar:
Yet with main strength his strokes he drew,
And o'er the lake the shallop flew;
With heads erect and whimpering cry,
The hounds behind their passage ply.
Nor frequent does the bright oar break 490
The darkening mirror of the lake,
Until the rocky isle they reach,
And moor their shallop on the beach.

XXV

The stranger viewed the shore around;
'Twas all so close with copsewood bound,
Nor track nor pathway might declare
That human foot frequented there,
Until the mountain maiden showed
A clambering unsuspected road,
That winded through the tangled screen, 500
And opened on a narrow green,
Where weeping birch and willow round
With their long fibres swept the ground.
Here, for retreat in dangerous hour,
Some chief had framed a rustic bower.

XXVI

It was a lodge of ample size,
But strange of structure and device;
Of such materials as around
The workman's hand had readiest found.

Lopped of their boughs their hoar trunks bared, ⁵¹⁰
And by the hatchet rudely squared,
To give the walls their destined height,
The sturdy oak and ash unite;
While moss and clay and leaves combined
To fence each crevice from the wind.
The lighter pine-trees overhead
Their slender length for rafters spread,
And withered heath and rushes dry
Supplied a russet canopy.
Due westward, fronting to the green, ⁵²⁰
A rural portico was seen,
Aloft on native pillars borne,
Of mountain fir with bark unshorn,
Where Ellen's hand had taught to twine
The ivy and Idæan vine,
The clematis, the favoured flower
Which boasts the name of virgin-bower,
And every hardy plant could bear
Loch Katrine's keen and searching air.
An instant in this porch she stayed, ⁵³⁰
And gaily to the stranger said:
"On heaven and on thy lady call,
And enter the enchanted hall!"

XXVII

"My hope, my heaven, my trust must be,
My gentle guide, in following thee!"—
He crossed the threshold,—and a clang
Of angry steel that instant rang.
To his bold brow his spirit rushed,
But soon for vain alarm he blushed,
When on the floor he saw displayed, ⁵⁴⁰
Cause of the din, a naked blade
Dropped from the sheath, that careless flung

Upon a stag's huge antlers swung ;
For all around, the walls to grace,
Hung trophies of the fight or chase :
A target there, a bugle here,
A battle-axe, a hunting-spear,
And broadswords, bows, and arrows store,
With the tusked trophies of the boar.
Here grins the wolf as when he died, 550
And there the wild-cat's brindled hide
The frontlet of the elk adorns,
Or mantles o'er the bison's horns ;
Pennons and flags defaced and stained,
The blackening streaks of blood retained,
And deer-skins, dappled, dun, and white,
With otter's fur and seal's unite,
In rude and uncouth tapestry all,
To garnish forth the sylvan hall.

XXVIII

The wondering stranger round him gazed,
And next the fallen weapon raised :—
Few were the arms whose sinewy strength
Sufficed to stretch it forth at length.
And as the brand he poised and swayed,
“I never knew but one,” he said,
“Whose stalwart arm might brook to wield
A blade like this in battle-field.”
She sighed, then smiled and took the word :
“You see the guardian champion's sword ;
As light it trembles in his hand 560
As in my grasp a hazel wand :
My sire's tall form might grace the part
Of Ferragus or Ascabart,
But in the absent giant's hold
Are women now, and menials old.” 570

XXIX

The mistress of the mansion came,
Mature of age, a graceful dame,
Whose easy step and stately port
Had well become a princely court,
To whom, though more than kindred knew, 580
Young Ellen gave a mother's due.
Meet welcome to her guest she made,
And every courteous rite was paid
That hospitality could claim,
Though all unasked his birth and name.
Such then the reverence to a guest,
That fellest foe might join the feast,
And from his deadliest foeman's door
Unquestioned turn, the banquet o'er.
At length his rank the stranger names, 590
"The Knight of Snowdoun, James Fitz-James;
Lord of a barren heritage,
Which his brave sires, from age to age,
By their good swords had held with toil;
His sire had fallen in such turmoil,
And he, God wot, was forced to stand
Oft for his right with blade in hand.
This morning with Lord Moray's train
He chased a stalwart stag in vain,
Outstripped his comrades, missed the deer, 600
Lost his good steed, and wandered here."

XXX

Fain would the Knight in turn require
The name and state of Ellen's sire.
Well showed the elder lady's mien
That courts and cities she had seen;
Ellen, though more her looks displayed
The simple grace of sylvan maid,
In speech and gesture, form and face,

Showed she was come of gentle race.
 'Twere strange in ruder rank to find 610
 Such looks, such manners, and such mind.
 Each hint the Knight of Snowdoun gave,
 Dame Margaret heard with silence grave;
 Or Ellen, innocently gay,
 Turned all inquiry light away:—
 “Weird women we! by dale and down
 We dwell, afar from tower and town.
 We stem the flood, we ride the blast,
 On wandering knights our spells we cast;
 While viewless minstrels touch the string, 620
 ’Tis thus our charmed rhymes we sing.”
 She sung, and still a harp unseen
 Filled up the symphony between.

XXXI

SONG

“Soldier, rest! thy warfare o’er,
 Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking;
 Dream of battled fields no more,
 Days of danger, nights of waking.
 In our isle’s enchanted hall,
 Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,
 Fairy strains of music fall, 630
 Every sense in slumber dewing.
 Soldier, rest! thy warfare o’er,
 Dream of fighting fields no more;
 Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
 Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

“No rude sound shall reach thine ear,
 Armour’s clang or war-steed champing,
 Trump nor pibroch summon here
 Mustering clan or squadron tramping.
 Yet the lark’s shrill fife may come 640

At the daybreak from the fallow,
And the bittern sound his drum,
Booming from the sedgy shallow.
Ruder sounds shall none be near,
Guards nor warders challenge here,
Here's no war-steed's neigh and champing,
Shouting clans or squadrons stamping."

XXXII

She paused,—then, blushing, led the lay,
To grace the stranger of the day.
Her mellow notes awhile prolong
The cadence of the flowing song,
Till to her lips in measured frame
The minstrel verse spontaneous came.

650

SONG CONTINUED

"Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;
While our slumbrous spells assail ye,
Dream not, with the rising sun,
Bugles here shall sound reveillé.
Sleep! the deer is in his den;
Sleep! thy hounds are by thee lying;
Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen
How thy gallant steed lay dying.
Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;
Think not of the rising sun,
For at dawning to assail ye
Here no bugles sound reveillé."

660

XXXIII

The hall was cleared,—the stranger's bed,
Was there of mountain heather spread,
Where oft a hundred guests had lain,
And dreamed their forest sports again.
But vainly did the heath-flower shed

670

Its moorland fragrance round his head;
Not Ellen's spell had lulled to rest
The fever of his troubled breast.
In broken dreams the image rose
Of varied perils, pains, and woes:
His steed now flounders in the brake,
Now sinks his barge upon the lake;
Now leader of a broken host,
His standard falls, his honour's lost.
Then,—from my couch may heavenly might 680
Chase that worst phantom of the night!—
Again returned the scenes of youth,
Of confident, undoubting truth;
Again his soul he interchanged
With friends whose hearts were long estranged.
They come, in dim procession led,
The cold, the faithless, and the dead;
As warm each hand, each brow as gay,
As if they parted yesterday.
And doubt distracts him at the view,— 690
O were his senses false or true?
Dreamed he of death or broken vow,
Or is it all a vision now?

XXXIV

At length, with Ellen in a grove
He seemed to walk and speak of love;
She listened with a blush and sigh,
His suit was warm, his hopes were high.
He sought her yielded hand to clasp,
And a cold gauntlet met his grasp:
The phantom's sex was changed and gone, 700
Upon its head a helmet shone;
Slowly enlarged to giant size,
With darkened cheek and threatening eyes,
The grisly visage, stern and hoar,

To Ellen still a likeness bore.—
He woke, and, panting with affright,
Recalled the vision of the night.
The hearth's decaying brands were red,
And deep and dusky lustre shed,
Half showing, half concealing, all
The uncouth trophies of the hall.
Mid those the stranger fixed his eye
Where that huge falchion hung on high,
And thoughts on thoughts, a countless throng,
Rushed, chasing countless thoughts along,
Until, the giddy whirl to cure,
He rose and sought the moonshine pure.

710

XXXV

The wild rose, eglantine, and broom
Wasted around their rich perfume;
The birch-trees wept in fragrant balm;
The aspens slept beneath the calm;
The silver light, with quivering glance,
Played on the water's still expanse,—
Wild were the heart whose passion's sway
Could rage beneath the sober ray!
He felt its calm, that warrior guest,
While thus he communed with his breast:—
“Why is it, at each turn I trace
Some memory of that exiled race?
Can I not mountain maiden spy,
But she must bear the Douglas eye?
Can I not view a Highland brand,
But it must match the Douglas hand?
Can I not frame a fevered dream,
But still the Douglas is the theme?
I'll dream no more,—by manly mind
Not even in sleep is will resigned.
My midnight orisons said o'er,

720

730

I'll turn to rest, and dream no more."
His midnight orisons he told,
A prayer with every bead of gold,
Consigned to heaven his cares and woes,
And sunk in undisturbed repose,
Until the heath-cock shrilly crew,
And morning dawned on Benvenue.

CANTO SECOND

THE ISLAND

I

At morn the black-cock trims his ^{2 lack-}jetty wing,
'Tis morning prompts the linnet's blithest lay, ^{a small bird}
All Nature's children feel the matin spring ^{the morning}
Of life reviving, with reviving day;
And while yon little bark glides down the bay,
Wafting the stranger on his way again,
Morn's genial influence roused a minstrel gray,
And sweetly o'er the lake was heard thy strain,
Mixed with the sounding harp, O white-haired Allan-bane!

II

SONG

"Not faster yonder rowers' might 10
Flings from their oars the spray,
Not faster yonder rippling bright,
That tracks the shallop's course in light,
Melts in the lake away,
Than men from memory erase
The benefits of former days;
Then, stranger, go! good speed the while,
Nor think again of the lonely isle.

"High place to thee in royal court,
High place in battled line, 20
Good hawk and hound for sylvan sport!
Where beauty sees the brave resort,
The honoured meed be thine!

True be thy sword, thy friend sincere,
 Thy lady constant, kind, and dear,
 And lost in love's and friendship's smile
 Be memory of the lonely isle!

III

SONG CONTINUED

"But if beneath yon southern sky
 A plaided stranger roam,
 Whose drooping crest and stifled sigh,
 And sunken cheek and heavy eye,
 Pine for his Highland home;
 Then, warrior, then be thine to show
 The care that soothes a wanderer's woe:
 Remember then thy hap erewhile,
 A stranger in the lonely isle.

30

"Or if on life's uncertain main *sea*.
 Mishap shall mar thy sail;
 If faithful, wise, and brave in vain,
 Woe, want, and exile thou sustain
 Beneath the fickle gale;
 Waste not a sigh on fortune changed,
 On thankless courts, or friends estranged,
 But come where kindred worth shall smile,
 To greet thee in the lonely isle."

40

IV

As died the sounds upon the tide,
 The shallop reached the mainland side,
 And ere his onward way he took,
 The stranger cast a lingering look,
 Where easily his eye might reach
 The Harper on the islet beach,
 Reclined against a blighted tree, *scattered*.

50

As wasted, gray, and worn as he.
 To minstrel meditation given,
 His reverend brow was raised to heaven,
 As from the rising sun to claim
 A sparkle of inspiring flame.
 His hand, reclined upon the wire,
 Seemed watching the awakening fire;
 So still he sat as those who wait
 Till judgment speak the doom of fate;
 So still, as if no breeze might dare
 To lift one lock of hoary hair;
 So still, as life itself were fled
 In the last sound his harp had sped.

60

V

Upon a rock with lichens wild,
 Beside him Ellen sat and smiled.—
 Smiled she to see the stately drake
 Lead forth his fleet upon the lake,
 While her vexed spaniel from the beach
 Bayed at the prize beyond his reach?
 Yet tell me, then, the maid who knows,
 Why deepened on her cheek the rose?—
 Forgive, forgive, Fidelity!
 Perchance the maiden smiled to see
 Yon parting lingerer wave adieu,
 And stop and turn to wave anew;
 And, lovely ladies, ere your ire
 Condemn the heroine of my lyre,
 Show me the fair would scorn to spy
 And prize such conquest of her eye!

70

80

VI

While yet he loitered on the spot,
 It seemed as Ellen marked him not;
 But when he turned him to the glade,

One courteous parting sign she made;
 And after, oft the knight would say,
 That not when prize of festal day
 Was dealt him by the brightest fair
 Who e'er wore jewel in her hair,
 So highly did his bosom swell 90
 As at that simple mute farewell.
 Now with a trusty mountain-guide,
 And his dark stag-hounds by his side,
 He parts,—the maid, unconscious still,
 Watched him wind slowly round the hill;
 But when his stately form was hid,
 The guardian in her bosom chid,—
 “Thy Malcolm! vain and selfish maid!”
 ’Twas thus upbraiding conscience said,—
 “Not so had Malcolm idly hung 100
 On the smooth phrase of Southern tongue;
 Not so had Malcolm strained his eye
 Another step than thine to spy.”—
 “Wake, Allan-bane,” aloud she cried
 To the old minstrel by her side,—
 “Arouse thee from thy moody dream!
 I’ll give thy harp heroic theme,
 And warm thee with a noble name;
 Pour forth the glory of the Græme!”
 Scarce from her lip the word had rushed, 110
 When deep the conscious maiden blushed;
 For of his clan, in hall and bower,
 Young Malcolm Græme was held the flower.

VII

The minstrel waked his harp,—three times
 Arose the well-known martial chimes,
 And thrice their high heroic pride
 In melancholy murmurs died.
 “Vainly thou bidst, O noble maid,”

Clasping his withered hands, he said,
"Vainly thou bidst me wake the strain, 120
Though all unwont to bid in vain.
Alas! than mine a mightier hand
Has tuned my harp, my strings has spanned!
I touch the chords of joy, but low
And mournful answer notes of woe;
And the proud march which victors tread
Sinks in the wailing for the dead.
O, well for me, if mine alone
That dirge's deep prophetic tone!
If, as my tuneful fathers said, 130
This harp, which erst Saint Modan swayed,
Can thus its master's fate foretell,
Then welcome be the minstrel's knell!

VIII

"But ah! dear lady, thus it sighed,
The eve thy sainted mother died;
And such the sounds which, while I strove
To wake a lay of war or love,
Came marring all the festal mirth,
Appalling me who gave them birth,
And, disobedient to my call, 140
Wailed loud through Bothwell's bannered hall,
Ere Douglasses, to ruin driven,
Were exiled from their native heaven.—
O! if yet worse mishap and woe
My master's house must undergo,
Or aught but weal to Ellen fair
Brood in these accents of despair,
No future bard, sad Harp! shall fling
Triumph or rapture from thy string;
One short, one final strain shall flow, 150
Fraught with unutterable woe,
Then shivered shall thy fragments lie,
Thy master cast him down and die!"

IX

Soothing she answered him: "Assuage,
 Mine honoured friend, the fears of age;
 All melodies to thee are known
 That harp has rung or pipe has blown,
 In Lowland vale or Highland glen,
 From Tweed to Spey—what marvel, then,
 At times unbidden notes should rise,
 Confusedly bound in memory's ties,
 Entangling, as they rush along,
 The war-march with the funeral song?—
 Small ground is now for boding fear;
 Obscure, but safe, we rest us here.
 My sire, in native virtue great,
 Resigning lordship, lands, and state,
 Not then to fortune more resigned
 Than yonder oak might give the wind;
 The graceful foliage storms may reave,
 The noble stem they cannot grieve.
 For me"—she stooped, and, looking round,
 Plucked a blue harebell from the ground,—
 "For me, whose memory scarce conveys
 An image of more splendid days,
 This little flower that loves the lea
 May well my simple emblem be;
 It drinks heaven's dew as blithe as rose
 That in the King's own garden grows;
 And when I place it in my hair,
 Allan, a bard is bound to swear
 He ne'er saw coronet so fair."
 Then playfully the chaplet wild
 She wreathed in her dark locks, and smiled.

X

Her smile, her speech, with winning sway,
 Wiled the old Harper's mood away.
 With such a look as hermits throw,

When angels stoop to soothe their woe,
 He gazed, till fond regret and pride
 Thrilled to a tear, then thus replied: 190
 "Loveliest and best! thou little know'st
 The rank, the honours, thou hast lost!
 O, might I live to see thee grace,
 In Scotland's court, thy birthright place,
 To see my favourite's step advance
 The lightest in the courtly dance.
 The cause of every gallant's sigh,
 And leading star of every eye,
 And theme of every minstrel's art,
 The Lady of the Bleeding Heart!" 200

XI

"Fair dreams are these," the maiden cried,—
 Light was her accent, yet she sighed,—
 "Yet is this mossy rock to me
 Worth splendid chair and canopy;
 Nor would my footstep spring more gay
 In courtly dance than blithe strathspey,
 Nor half so pleased mine ear incline
 To royal minstrel's lay as thine.
 And then for suitors proud and high,
 To bend before my conquering eye, 210
 Thou, flattering bard! thyself wilt say,
 That grim Sir Roderick owns its sway.
 The Saxon scourge, Clan-Alpine's pride,
 The terror of Loch Lomond's side,
 Would, at my suit, thou know'st, delay
 A Lennox foray—for a day."—

XII

The ancient bard her glee repressed:
 "Ill hast thou chosen theme for jest!
 For who, through all this western wild,
 Named Black Sir Roderick e'er, and smiled? 220

In Holy-Rood a knight he slew;
I saw, when back the dirk he drew,
Courtiers give place before the stride
Of the undaunted homicide;
And since, though outlawed, hath his hand
Full sternly kept his mountain land.
Who else dared give—ah! woe the day,
That I such hated truth should say!—
The Douglas, like a stricken deer,
Disowned by every noble peer, 230
Even the rude refuge we have here?
Alas, this wild marauding Chief
Alone might hazard our relief,
And now thy maiden charms expand,
Looks for his guerdon in thy hand;
Full soon may dispensation sought,
To back his suit, from Rome be brought.
Then, though an exile on the hill,
Thy father, as the Douglas, still
Be held in reverence and fear; 240
And though to Roderick thou'rt so dear
That thou mightst guide with silken thread,
Slave of thy will, this chieftain dread,
Yet, O loved maid, thy mirth refrain!
Thy hand is on a lion's mane.”—

XIII

“Minstrel,” the maid replied, and high
Her father's soul glanced from her eye,
“My debts to Roderick's house I know:
All that a mother could bestow
To Lady Margaret's care I owe, 250
Since first an orphan in the wild
She sorrowed o'er her sister's child;
To her brave chieftain son, from ire
Of Scotland's king who shrouds my sire,

A deeper, holier debt is owed;
And, could I pay it with my blood,
Allan! Sir Roderick should command
My blood, my life,—but not my hand.
Rather will Ellen Douglas dwell
A votaress in Maronnan's cell;
Rather through realms beyond the sea,
Seeking the world's cold charity,
Where ne'er was spoke a Scottish word,
And ne'er the name of Douglas heard,
An outcast pilgrim will she rove,
Than wed the man she cannot love.

280

XIV

"Thou shak'st, good friend, thy tresses gray,—
That pleading look, what can it say
But what I own?—I grant him brave,
But wild as Bracklinn's thundering wave;
And generous,—save vindictive mood
Or jealous transport chafe his blood:
I grant him true to friendly band,
As his claymore is to his hand;
But O! that very blade of steel
More mercy for a foe would feel:
I grant him liberal, to fling
Among his clan the wealth they bring,
When back by lake and glen they wind,
And in the Lowland leave behind,
Where once some pleasant hamlet stood,
A mass of ashes slaked with blood.
The hand that for my father fought
I honour, as his daughter ought;
But can I clasp it reeking red
From peasants slaughtered in their shed?
No! wildly while his virtues gleam,
They make his passions darker seem,

270

280

And flash along his spirit high,
 Like lightning o'er the midnight sky. 290
 While yet a child,—and children know,
 Instinctive taught, the friend and foe,—
 I shuddered at his brow of gloom,
 His shadowy plaid and sable plume;
 A maiden grown, I ill could bear
 His haughty mien and lordly air:
 But, if thou join'st a suitor's claim,
 In serious mood, to Roderick's name,
 I thrill with anguish! or, if e'er
 A Douglas knew the word, with fear, 300
 To change such odious theme were best,—
 What think'st thou of our stranger guest?"—

XV

"What think I of him?—woe the while
 That brought such wanderer to our isle!
 Thy father's battle-brand, of yore
 For Tine-man forged by fairy lore,
 What time he leagued, no longer foes,
 His Border spears with Hotspur's bows,
 Did, self-unscabbarded, foreshow 310
 The footstep of a secret foe.
 If courtly spy hath harboured here,
 What may we for the Douglas fear?
 What for this island, deemed of old
 Clan-Alpine's last and surest hold?
 If neither spy nor foe, I pray
 What yet may jealous Roderick say?—
 Nay, wave not thy disdainful head!
 Bethink thee of the discord dread
 That kindled when at Beltane game
 Thou ledst the dance with Malcolm Græme; 320
 Still, though thy sire the peace renewed,

Smoulders in Roderick's breast the feud :
Beware !—But hark !—what sounds are these ?
My dull ears catch no faltering breeze,
No weeping birch nor aspens wake,
Nor breath is dimpling in the lake ;
Still is the canna's hoary beard,
Yet, by my minstrel faith, I heard—
And hark again ! some pipe of war
Sends the bold pibroch from afar.”

330

XVI

Far up the lengthened lake were spied
Four darkening specks upon the tide,
That, slow enlarging on the view,
Four manned and masted barges grew,
And, bearing downwards from Glengyle,
Steered full upon the lonely isle ;
The point of Brianchoil they passed,
And, to the windward as they cast,
Against the sun they gave to shine
The bold Sir Roderick's bannered Pine.
Nearer and nearer as they bear,
Spears, pikes, and axes flash in air.
Now might you see the tartans brave,
And plaids and plumage dance and wave :
Now see the bonnets sink and rise,
As his tough oar the rower plies ;
See, flashing at each sturdy stroke,
The wave ascending into smoke ;
See the proud pipers on the bow,
And mark the gaudy streamers flow
From their loud chanters down, and sweep
The furrowed bosom of the deep,
As, rushing through the lake amain,
They plied the ancient Highland strain.

340

350

XVII

Ever, as on they bore, more loud
 And louder rung the pibroch proud.
 At first the sounds, by distance tame,
 Mellowed along the waters came,
 And, lingering long by cape and bay,
 Wailed every harsher note away, 360
 Then bursting bolder on the ear,
 The clan's shrill Gathering they could hear,
 Those thrilling sounds that call the might
 Of old Clan-Alpine to the fight.
 Thick beat the rapid notes, as when
 The mustering hundreds shake the glen,
 And hurrying at the signal dread,
 The battered earth returns their tread.
 Then prelude light, of livelier tone,
 Expressed their merry marching on, 370
 Ere peal of closing battle rose,
 With mingled outcry, shrieks, and blows;
 And mimic din of stroke and ward,
 As broadsword upon target jarred;
 And groaning pause, ere yet again,
 Condensed, the battle yelled amain:
 The rapid charge, the rallying shout,
 Retreat borne headlong into rout,
 And bursts of triumph, to declare
 Clan-Alpine's conquest—all were there. 380
 Nor ended thus the strain, but slow
 Sunk in a moan prolonged and low,
 And changed the conquering clarion swell
 For wild lament o'er those that fell.

XVIII

The war-pipes ceased, but lake and hill
 Were busy with their echoes still;
 And, when they slept, a vocal strain

Bade their hoarse chorus wake again,
 While loud a hundred clansmen raise
 Their voices in their Chieftain's praise.
 Each boatman, bending to his oar,
 With measured sweep the burden bore.
 In such wild cadence as the breeze
 Makes through December's leafless trees.
 The chorus first could Allan know,
 "Roderick Vich Alpine, ho! iro!"
 And near, and nearer as they rowed,
 Distinct the martial ditty flowed.

390

XIX

BOAT SONG

"Hail to the Chief who in triumph advances!
 Honoured and blessed be the ever-green Pine!
 Long may the tree, in his banner that glances,
 Flourish, the shelter and grace of our line!
 Heaven send it happy dew,
 Earth lend it sap anew,
 Gaily to bourgeon and broadly to grow,
 While every Highland glen
 Sends our shout back again,
 'Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!'"

400

"Ours is no sapling, chance-sown by the fountain,
 Blooming at Beltane, in winter to fade;
 When the whirlwind has stripped every leaf on the
 mountain,
 The more shall Clan-Alpine exult in her shade.
 Moored in the rifted rock,
 Proof to the tempest's shock,
 Firmer he roots him the ruder it blow;
 Menteith and Breadalbane, then,
 Echo his praise again,
 'Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho, ieroe!'"

410

XX

"Proudly our pibroch has thrilled in Glen Fruin,
 And Bannochar's groans to our slogan replied; 420
 Glen Luss and Ross-dhu, they are smoking in ruin,
 And the best of Loch Lomond lie dead on her side.
 Widow and Saxon maid
 Long shall lament our raid,
 Think of Clan-Alpine with fear and with woe;
 Lennox and Leven-glen
 Shake when they hear again,
 'Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!'

"Row, vassals, row, for the pride of the Highlands!
 Stretch to your oars for the ever-green Pine! 430
 O that the rosebud that graces yon islands
 Were wreathed in a garland around him to twine!
 O that some seedling gem,
 Worthy such noble stem,
 Honoured and blessed in their shadow might grow!
 Loud should Clan-Alpine then
 Ring from her deepest glen,
 'Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!' "

XXI

With all her joyful female band
 Had Lady Margaret sought the strand. 440
 Loose on the breeze their tresses flew,
 And high their snowy arms they threw,
 As echoing back with shrill acclaim,
 And chorus wild, the Chieftain's name;
 While, prompt to please, with mother's art,
 The darling passion of his heart,
 The Dame called Ellen to the strand,
 To greet her kinsman ere he land:
 "Come, loiterer, come! a Douglas thou,
 And shun to wreathe a victor's brow?" 450

Reluctantly and slow, the maid
The unwelcome summoning obeyed,
And when a distant bugle rung,
In the mid-path aside she sprung:—
“List, Allan-bane! From mainland east
I hear my father’s signal blast.
Be ours,” she cried, “the skiff to guide,
And waft him from the mountain-side.”
Then, like a sunbeam, swift and bright,
She darted to her shallop light,
And, eagerly while Roderick scanned,
For her dear form, his mother’s band,
The islet far behind her lay,
And she had landed in the bay.

460

XXII

Some feelings are to mortals given
With less of earth in them than heaven;
And if there be a human tear
From passion’s dross refined and clear,
A tear so limpid and so meek
It would not stain an angel’s cheek,
’Tis that which pious fathers shed
Upon a duteous daughter’s head!
And as the Douglas to his breast
His darling Ellen closely pressed,
Such holy drops her tresses steeped,
Though ’twas an hero’s eye that weeped.
Nor while on Ellen’s faltering tongue
Her filial welcomes crowded hung,
Marked she that fear—affection’s proof—
Still held a graceful youth aloof;
No! not till Douglas named his name,
Although the youth was Malcolm Græme.

470

480

XXIII

Allan, with wistful look the while,
Marked Roderick landing on the isle;
His master piteously he eyed,
Then gazed upon the Chieftain's pride,
Then dashed with hasty hand away
From his dimmed eye the gathering spray;
And Douglas, as his hand he laid
On Malcolm's shoulder, kindly said:
"Canst thou, young friend, no meaning spy
In my poor follower's glistening eye?
I'll tell thee:—he recalls the day
When in my praise he led the lay
O'er the arched gate of Bothwell proud,
While many a minstrel answered loud,
When Percy's Norman pennon, won
In bloody field, before me shone,
And twice ten knights, the least a name
As mighty as yon Chief may claim,
Gracing my pomp, behind me came.
Yet trust me, Malcolm, not so proud
Was I of all that marshalled crowd,
Though the waned crescent owned my might,
And in my train trooped lord and knight,
Though Blantyre hymned her holiest lays,
And Bothwell's bards flung back my praise,
As when this old man's silent tear,
And this poor maid's affection dear,
A welcome give more kind and true
Than aught my better fortunes knew.
Forgive, my friend, a father's boast,—
O, it out-beggars all I lost!"

490

500

510

XXIV

Delightful praise!—like summer rose,
That brighter in the dew-drop glows,
The bashful maiden's cheek appeared,

For Douglas spoke, and Malcolm heard.
The flush of shame-faced joy to hide,
The hounds, the hawk, her cares divide;
The loved caresses of the maid
The dogs with crouch and whimper paid;
And, at her whistle, on her hand
The falcon took his favourite stand,
Closed his dark wing, relaxed his eye,
Nor, though unhooded, sought to fly.
And, trust, while in such guise she stood,
Like fabled Goddess of the wood,
That if a father's partial thought
O'erweighed her worth and beauty aught,
Well might the lover's judgment fail
To balance with a juster scale;
For with each secret glance he stole,
The fond enthusiast sent his soul.

16.

XXV

Of stature fair, and slender frame,
But firmly knit, was Malcolm Græme.
The belted plaid and tartan hose
Did ne'er more graceful limbs disclose;
His flaxen hair, of sunny hue,
Curled closely round his bonnet blue.
Trained to the chase, his eagle eye
The ptarmigan in snow could spy;
Each pass, by mountain, lake, and heath,
He knew, through Lennox and Menteith;
Vain was the bound of dark-brown doe
When Malcolm bent his sounding bow,
And scarce that doe, though winged with fear,
Outstripped in speed the mountaineer:
Right up Ben Lomond could he press,
And not a sob his toil confess.
His form accorded with a mind

Lively and ardent, frank and kind;
 A blither heart, till Ellen came,
 Did never love nor sorrow tame;
 It danced as lightsome in his breast
 As played the feather on his crest.
 Yet friends, who nearest knew the youth,
 His scorn of wrong, his zeal for truth,
 And bards, who saw his features bold
 When kindled by the tales of old,
 Said, were that youth to manhood grown,
 Not long should Roderick Dhu's renown
 Be foremost voiced by mountain fame,
 But quail to that of Malcolm Græme.

560

XXVI

Now back they wend their watery way,
 And, "O my sire!" did Ellen say,
 "Why urge thy chase so far astray?
 And why so late returned? And why"—
 The rest was in her speaking eye.
 "My child, the chase I follow far,
 'Tis mimicry of noble war;
 And with that gallant pastime reft
 Were all of Douglas I have left.
 I met young Malcolm as I strayed
 Far eastward, in Glenfinlas' shade;
 Nor strayed I safe, for all around
 Hunters and horsemen scoured the ground.
 This youth, though still a royal ward,
 Risked life and land to be my guard,
 And through the passes of the wood
 Guided my steps, not unpursued;
 And Roderick shall his welcome make,
 Despite old spleen, for Douglas' sake.
 Then must he seek Strath-Endrick glen,
 Nor peril aught for me again."

570

580

XXVII

Sir Roderick, who to meet them came,
Reddened at sight of Malcolm Græme,
Yet, not in action, word, or eye,
Failed aught in hospitality.
In talk and sport they whiled away
The morning of that summer day; 590
But at high noon a courier light
Held secret parley with the knight,
Whose moody aspect soon declared
That evil were the news he heard.
Deep thought seemed toiling in his head;
Yet was the evening banquet made
Ere he assembled round the flame
His mother, Douglas, and the Græme,
And Ellen too; then cast around
His eyes, then fixed them on the ground, 600
As studying phrase that might avail
Best to convey unpleasant tale.
Long with his dagger's hilt he played,
Then raised his haughty brow, and said:—

XXVIII

“Short be my speech;—nor time affords,
Nor my plain temper, glozing words.
Kinsman and father,—if such name
Douglas vouchsafe to Roderick's claim;
Mine honoured mother;—Ellen,—why,
My cousin, turn away thine eye?— 610
And Græme, in whom I hope to know
Full soon a noble friend or foe,
When age shall give thee thy command,
And leading in thy native land,—
List all!—The King's vindictive pride
Boasts to have tamed the Border-side,
Where chiefs, with hound and hawk who came

To share their monarch's sylvan game,
Themselves in bloody toils were snared,
And when the banquet they prepared,
And wide their loyal portals flung,
O'er their own gateway struggling hung.
Loud cries their blood from Meggat's mead,
From Yarrow braes and banks of Tweed,
Where the lone streams of Ettrick glide,
And from the silver Teviot's side;
The dales, where martial clans did ride,
Are now one sheep-walk, waste and wide.
This tyrant of the Scottish throne,
So faithless and so ruthless known,
Now hither comes; his end the same,
The same pretext of sylvan game.
What grace for Highland Chiefs, judge ye
By fate of Border chivalry.
Yet more; amid Glenfinlas' green,
Douglas, thy stately form was seen.
This by espial sure I know:
Your counsel in the streight I show."

620

630

XXIX

Ellen and Margaret fearfully
Sought comfort in each other's eye,
Then turned their ghastly look, each one,
This to her sire, that to her son.
The hasty colour went and came
In the bold cheek of Malcolm Græme,
But from his glance it well appeared
'Twas but for Ellen that he feared;
While, sorrowful, but undismayed,
The Douglas thus his counsel said:
"Brave Roderick, though the tempest roar,
It may but thunder and pass o'er;
Nor will I here remain an hour,

640

650

To draw the lightning on thy bower ;
For well thou know'st, at this gray head
The royal bolt were fiercest sped.
For thee, who, at thy King's command,
Canst aid him with a gallant band,
Submission, homage, humbled pride,
Shall turn the Monarch's wrath aside.
Poor remnants of the Bleeding Heart,
Ellen and I will seek apart
The refuge of some forest cell,
There, like 'he hunted quarry, dwell,
Till on the mountain and the moor
The stern pursuit be passed and o'er."—

660

XXX

"No, by mine honour," Roderick said,
"So help me Heaven, and my good blade!
No, never! Blasted be yon Pine,
My father's ancient crest and mine,
If from its shade in danger part
The lineage of the Bleeding Heart!
Hear my blunt speech: grant me this maid
To wife, thy counsel to mine aid;
To Douglas, leagued with Roderick Dhu,
Will friends and allies flock enow;
Like cause of doubt, distrust, and grief,
Will bind to us each Western Chief.
When the loud pipes my bridal tell,
The Links of Forth shall hear the knell,
The guards shall start in Stirling's porch;
And when I light the nuptial torch,
A thousand villages in flames
Shall scare the slumbers of King James!—
Nay, Ellen, blench not thus away,
And, mother, cease these signs, I pray;
I meant not all my heat might say.—

670

680

Small need of inroad or of fight,
When the sage Douglas may unite
Each mountain clan in friendly band,
To guard the passes of their land,
Till the foiled King from pathless glen
Shall bootless turn him home again."

690

XXXI

There are who have, at midnight hour,
In slumber scaled a dizzy tower,
And, on the verge that beetled o'er
The ocean tide's incessant roar,
Dreamed calmly out their dangerous dream,
Till wakened by the morning beam;
When, dazzled by the eastern glow,
Such startler cast his glance below,
And saw unmeasured depth around,
And heard unintermitted sound,
And thought the battled fence so frail,
It waved like cobweb in the gale;—
Amid his senses' giddy wheel,
Did he not desperate impulse feel,
Headlong to plunge himself below,
And meet the worst his fears foreshow?—
Thus Ellen, dizzy and astound,
As sudden ruin yawned around,
By crossing terrors wildly tossed,
Still for the Douglas fearing most,
Could scarce the desperate thought withstand,
To buy his safety with her hand.

700

710

XXXII

Such purpose dread could Malcolm spy
In Ellen's quivering lip and eye,
And eager rose to speak,—but ere
His tongue could hurry forth his fear,

Had Douglas marked the hectic strife,
Where death seemed combating with life;
For to her cheek, in feverish flood, 720
One instant rushed the throbbing blood,
Then ebbing back, with sudden sway,
Left its domain as wan as clay.
“Roderick, enough! enough!” he cried,
“My daughter cannot be thy bride;
Not that the blush to wooer dear,
Nor paleness that of maiden fear.
It may not be,—forgive her, Chief,
Nor hazard aught for our relief.
Against his sovereign, Douglas ne’er 730
Will level a rebellious spear.
’Twas I that taught his youthful hand
To rein a steed and wield a brand;
I see him yet, the princely boy!
Not Ellen more my pride and joy;
I love him still, despite my wrongs
By hasty wrath and slanderous tongues.
O, seek the grace you well may find,
Without a cause to mine combined!”

XXXIII

Twice through the hall the Chieftain strode; 740
The waving of his tartans broad,
The darkened brow, where wounded pride
With ire and disappointment vied,
Seemed, by the torch’s gloomy light,
Like the ill Demon of the night,
Stooping his pinions’ shadowy sway
Upon the nighted pilgrim’s way:
But, unrequited Love! thy dart
Plunged deepest its envenomed smart,
And Roderick, with thine anguish stung, 750
At length the hand of Douglas wrung,

While eyes that mocked at tears before
With bitter drops were running o'er.
The death-pangs of long-cherished hope
Scarce in that ample breast had scope,
But, struggling with his spirit proud,
Convulsive heaved its checkered shroud,
While every sob—so mute were all—
Was heard distinctly through the hall.
The son's despair, the mother's look,
Ill might the gentle Ellen brook;
She rose, and to her side there came,
To aid her parting steps, the Græme.

760

XXXIV

Then Roderick from the Douglas broke—
As flashes flame through sable smoke,
Kindling its wreaths, long, dark, and low,
To one broad blaze of ruddy glow,
So the deep anguish of despair
Burst, in fierce jealousy, to air.
With stalwart grasp his hand he laid
On Malcolm's breast and belted plaid:
"Back, beardless boy!" he sternly said,
"Back, minion! holdst thou thus at naught
The lesson I so lately taught?
This roof, the Douglas, and that maid,
Thank thou for punishment delayed."
Eager as greyhound on his game,
Fiercely with Roderick grappled Græme.
"Perish my name, if aught afford
Its Chieftain safety save his sword!"
Thus as they strove their desperate hand
Griped to the dagger or the brand,
And death had been—but Douglas rose,
And thrust between the struggling foes
His giant strength:—"Chieftains, forego!

770

780

I hold the first who strikes my foe.—
Madmen, forbear your frantic jar!
What! is the Douglas fallen so far,
His daughter's hand is deemed the spoil
Of such dishonourable broil?" 790
Sullen and slowly they unclasp,
As struck with shame, their desperate grasp,
And each upon his rival glared,
With foot advanced and blade half bared.

XXXV

Ere yet the brands aloft were flung,
Margaret on Roderick's mantle hung,
And Malcolm heard his Ellen's scream,
As faltered through terrific dream.
Then Roderick plunged in sheath his sword,
And veiled his wrath in scornful word: 800
"Rest safe till morning; pity 'twere
Such cheek should feel the midnight air!
Then mayst thou to James Stuart tell,
Roderick will keep the lake and fell,
Nor lackey with his freeborn clan
The pageant pomp of earthly man.
More would he of Clan-Alpine know,
Thou canst our strength and passes show.—
Malise, what ho!"—his henchman came:
"Give our safe-conduct to the Græme." 810
Young Malcolm answered, calm and bold:
"Fear nothing for thy favourite hold;
The spot an angel deigned to grace
Is blessed, though robbers haunt the place.
Thy churlish courtesy for those
Reserve, who fear to be thy foes.
As safe to me the mountain way
At midnight as in blaze of day,
Though with his boldest at his back

Even Roderick Dhu beset the track.—
Brave Douglas,—lovely Ellen,—nay,
Naught here of parting will I say.
Earth does not hold a lonesome glen
So secret but we meet again.—
Chieftain! we too shall find an hour"—
He said, and left the sylvan bower.

820

XXXVI

Old Allan followed to the strand—
Such was the Douglas's command—
And anxious told, how, on the morn,
The stern Sir Roderick deep had sworn,
The Fiery Cross should circle o'er
Dale, glen, and valley, down, and moor.
Much were the peril to the Græme
From those who to the signal came;
Far up the lake 'twere safest land,
Himself would row him to the strand.
He gave his counsel to the wind,
While Malcolm did, unheeding, bind,
Round dirk and pouch and broadsword rolled,
His ample plaid in tightened fold,
And stripped his limbs to such array
As best might suit the watery way,—

830

840

XXXVII

Then spoke abrupt: "Farewell to thee,
Pattern of old fidelity!"
The Minstrel's hand he kindly pressed,—
"O, could I point a place of rest!
My sovereign holds in ward my land,
My uncle leads my vassal band;
To tame his foes, his friends to aid,
Poor Malcolm has but heart and blade.
Yet, if there be one faithful Græme

850

Who loves the chieftain of his name,
Not long shall honoured Douglas dwell
Like hunted stag in mountain cell;
Nor, ere yon pride-swollen robber dare,—
I may not give the rest to air!
Tell Roderick Dhu I owed him naught,
Not the poor service of a boat,
To waft me to yon mountain-side.”
Then plunged he in the flashing tide. 860
Bold o’er the flood his head he bore,
And stoutly steered him from the shore;
And Allan strained his anxious eye,
Far mid the lake his form to spy,
Darkening across each puny wave,
To which the moon her silver gave.
Fast as the cormorant could skim,
The swimmer plied each active limb;
Then landing in the moonlight dell,
Loud shouted of his weal/to tell. 870
The Minstrel heard the far halloo,
And joyful from the shore withdrew.



CANTO THIRD

THE GATHERING

I

Time rolls his ceaseless course. The race of yore,
Who danced our infancy upon their knee,
And told our marvelling boyhood legends store
Of their strange ventures happed by land or sea,
How are they blotted from the things that be!
How few, all weak and withered of their force,
Wait on the verge of dark eternity,
Like stranded wrecks, the tide returning hoarse,
To sweep them from our sight! Time rolls his ceaseless
course.

Yet live there still who can remember well,
How, when a mountain chief his bugle blew,
Both field and forest, dingle, cliff, and dell,
And solitary heath, the signal knew;
And fast the faithful clan around him drew,
What time the warning note was keenly wound,
What time aloft their kindred banner flew,
While clamorous war-pipes yelled the gathering sound,
And while the Fiery Cross glanced, like a meteor, round.

II

The Summer dawn's reflected hue
To purple changed Loch Katrine blue;
Mildly and soft the western breeze
Just kissed the lake, just stirred the trees,

And the pleased lake, like maiden coy,
Trembled but dimpled not for joy:
The mountain-shadows on her breast
Were neither broken nor at rest;
In bright uncertainty they lie,
Like future joys to Fancy's eye.
The water-lily to the light
Her chalice reared of silver bright; 30
The doe awoke, and to the lawn,
Begemmed with dew-drops, led her fawn;
The gray mist left the mountain-side,
The torrent showed its glistening pride;
Invisible in flecked sky
The lark sent down her revelry;
The blackbird and the speckled thrush
Good-morrow gave from brake and bush;
In answer cooed the cushat dove
Her notes of peace and rest and love. 40

III

Imagined No thought of peace, no thought of rest,
Assuaged the storm in Roderick's breast.
With sheathed broadsword in his hand,
Abrupt he paced the islet strand,
And eyed the rising sun, and laid
His hand on his impatient blade.
Beneath a rock, his vassals' care
Was prompt the ritual to prepare,
With deep and deathful meaning fraught;
For such Antiquity had taught 50
Was preface meet, ere yet abroad
The Cross of Fire should take its road.
The shrinking band stood oft aghast
At the impatient glance he cast;—
Such glance the mountain eagle threw,
As, from the cliffs of Benvenue,

She spread her dark sails on the wind,
And, high in middle heaven reclined,
With her broad shadow on the lake,
Silenced the warblers of the brake.

60

IV

A heap of withered boughs was piled,
Of juniper and rowan wild,
Mingled with shivers from the oak,
Rent by the lightning's recent stroke.
Brian the Hermit by it stood,
Barefooted, in his frock and hood.
His grizzled beard and matted hair
Obscured a visage of despair;
His naked arms and legs, seamed o'er,
The scars of frantic penance bore.
That monk, of savage form and face,
The impending danger of his race
Had drawn from deepest solitude,
Far in Benharrow's bosom rude.
Not his the mien of Christian priest,
But Druid's, from the grave released,
Whose hardened heart and eye might brook
On human sacrifice to look;
And much, 'twas said, of heathen lore
Mixed in the charms he muttered o'er.
The hallowed creed gave only worse
And deadlier emphasis of curse.
No peasant sought that Hermit's prayer,
His cave the pilgrim shunned with care;
The eager huntsman knew his bound,
And in mid chase called off his hound;
Or if, in lonely glen or strath,
The desert-dweller met his path,
He prayed, and signed the cross between,
While terror took devotion's mien.

70

80

90

V

Of Brian's birth strange tales were told.
 His mother watched a midnight fold,
 Built deep within a dreary glen,
 Where scattered lay the bones of men
 In some forgotten battle slain,
 And bleached by drifting wind and rain.
 It might have tamed a warrior's heart
 To view such mockery of his art!
 The knot-grass fettered there the hand
 Which once could burst an iron band;
 Beneath the broad and ample bone,
 That bucklered heart to fear unknown,
 A feeble and a timorous guest,
 The fieldfare framed her lowly nest;
 There the slow blind-worm left his slime
 On the fleet limbs that mocked at time;
 And there, too, lay the leader's skull,
 Still wreathed with chaplet, flushed and full,
 For heath-bell, with her purple bloom,
 Supplied the bonnet and the plume.
 All night, in this sad glen, the maid
 Sat shrouded in her mantle's shade:
 She said no shepherd sought her side,
 No hunter's hand her snood untied,
 Yet ne'er again to braid her hair
 The virgin snood did Alice wear;
 Nor sought she, from that fatal night,
 Or holy church or blessed rite,
 But locked her secret in her breast,
 And died in travail, unconfessed.

100

110

120

VI

Alone, among his young compeers,
 Was Brian from his infant years;

companions

A moody and heart-broken boy,
 Estranged from sympathy and joy,
 Bearing each taunt which careless tongue
 On his mysterious lineage flung.
 Whole nights he spent by moonlight pale,
 To wood and stream his hap to wail,
 Till, frantic, he as truth received
 What of his birth the crowd believed, 130
 And sought, in mist and meteor fire,
 To meet and know his Phantom Sire!
 In vain, to soothe his wayward fate,
 The cloister oped her pitying gate;
 In vain the learning of the age
 Unclassed the sable-lettered page;
 Even in its treasures he could find
 Food for the fever of his mind.
 Eager he read whatever tells
 Of magic, cabala, and spells, 140
 And every dark pursuit allied
 To curious and presumptuous pride;
 Till with fired brain and nerves o'erstrung,
 And heart with mystic horrors wrung,
 Desperate he sought Benharrow's den,
 And hid him from the haunts of men.

VII

The desert gave him visions wild,
 Such as might suit the spectre's child.
 Where with black cliffs the torrents toil,
 He watched the wheeling eddies boil, 150
 Till from their foam his dazzled eyes
 Beheld the River Demon rise:
 The mountain mist took form and limb
 Of noontide hag or goblin grim;
 The midnight wind came wild and dread,
 Swelled with the voices of the dead;
 Far on the future battle-heath

His eye beheld the ranks of death :
Thus the lone Seer, from mankind hurled,
Shaped forth a disembodied world. 160
One lingering sympathy of mind
Still bound him to the mortal kind ;
The only parent he could claim
Of ancient Alpine's lineage came.
Late had he heard, in prophet's dream,
The fatal Ben-Shie's boding scream ;
Sounds, too, had come in midnight blast
Of charging steeds, careering fast
Along Benharrow's shingly side,
Where mortal horseman ne'er might ride ; 170
The thunderbolt had split the pine,—
All augured ill to Alpine's line.
He girt his loins, and came to show
The signals of impending woe,
And now stood prompt to bless or ban,
As bade the Chieftain of his clan.

VIII

'Twas all prepared ;—and from the rock
A goat, the patriarch of the flock,
Before the kindling pile was laid,
And pierced by Roderick's ready blade. 180
Patient the sickening victim eyed
The life-blood ebb in crimson tide
Down his clogged beard and shaggy limb,
Till darkness glazed his eyeballs dim.
The grisly priest, with murmuring prayer,
A slender crosslet framed with care,
A cubit's length in measure due ;
The shaft and limbs were rods of yew,
Whose parents in Inch-Cailliach wave
Their shadows o'er Clan-Alpine's grave, 190
And, answering Lomond's breezes deep,

Soothe many a chieftain's endless sleep.
 The Cross thus formed he held on high,
 With wasted hand and haggard eye,
 And strange and mingled feelings woke,
 While his anathema he spoke:—

IX

“Woe to the clansman who shall view
 This symbol of sepulchral yew,
 Forgetful that its branches grew
 Where weep the heavens their holiest dew
 On Alpine's dwelling low!

200

Deserter of his Chieftain's trust,
 He ne'er shall mingle with their dust,
 But, from his sires and kindred thrust,
 Each clansman's execration just

Shall doom him wrath and woe.”

He paused;—the word the vassals took,
 With forward step and fiery look,
 On high their naked brands they shook;
 Their clattering targets wildly strook;

210

And first in murmur low,
 Then, like the billow in his course,
 That far to seaward finds his source,
 And flings to shore his mustered force,
 Burst with loud roar their answer hoarse,

“Woe to the traitor, woe!”

Ben-an's gray scalp the accents knew,
 The joyous wolf from covert drew,
 The exulting eagle screamed afar,—
 They knew the voice of Alpine's war.

220

X

The shout was hushed on lake and fell,
 The Monk resumed his muttered spell:
 Dismal and low its accents came,
 The while he seathed the Cross with flame;

And the few words that reached the air,
Although the holiest name was there,
Had more of blasphemy than prayer.
But when he shook above the crowd
Its kindled points, he spoke aloud:—
“Woe to the wretch who fails to rear 230
At this dread sign the ready spear!
For, as the flames this symbol sear,
His home, the refuge of his fear,
 A kindred fate shall know;
Far o’er its roof the volumed flame
Clan-Alpine’s vengeance shall proclaim,
While maids and matrons on his name
Shall call down wretchedness and shame,
 And infamy and woe.”
Then rose the cry of females, shrill 240
As goshawk’s whistle on the hill,
Denouncing misery and ill,
Mingled with childhood’s babbling trill
 Of curses stammered slow;
Answering with imprecation dread,
“Sunk be his home in embers red!
And cursed be the meanest shed
That e’er shall hide the houseless head
 We doom to want and woe!”
A sharp and shrieking echo gave, 250
Coir-Uriskin, thy goblin cave!
And the gray pass where birches wave
 On Beala-nam-bo.

XI

Then deeper paused the priest anew,
And hard his labouring breath he drew,
While, with set teeth and clenched hand,
And eyes that glowed like fiery brand,
He meditated curse more dread,

And deadlier, on the clansman's head
Who, summoned to his chieftain's aid, 260
The signal saw and disobeyed.
The crosslet's points of sparkling wood
He quenched among the bubbling blood,
And, as again the sign he reared,
Hollow and hoarse his voice was heard:
"When flits this Cross from man to man,
Vich-Alpine's summons to his clan,
Burst be the ear that fails to heed!
Palsied the foot that shuns to speed!
May ravens tear the careless eyes, 270
Wolves make the coward heart their prize!
As sinks that blood-stream in the earth,
So may his heart's-blood drench his hearth!
As dies in hissing gore the spark,
Quench thou his light, Destruction dark!
And be the grace to him denied,
Bought by this sign to all beside!"
He ceased; no echo gave again
The murmur of the deep Amen.

XII

Then Roderick with impatient look 280
From Brian's hand the symbol took:
"Speed, Malise, speed!" he said, and gave
The crosslet to his henchman brave.
"The muster-place be Lanrick mead—
Instant the time—speed, Malise, speed!"
Like heath-bird, when the hawks pursue,
A barge across Loch Katrine flew:
High stood the henchman on the prow;
So rapidly the barge-men row,
The bubbles, where they launched the boat, 290
Were all unbroken and afloat,
Dancing in foam and ripple still,

When it had neared the mainland hill;
And from the silver beach's side
Still was the prow three fathom wide,
When lightly bounded to the land
The messenger of blood and brand.

XIII

Speed, Malise, speed! the dun deer's hide
On fleeter foot was never tied.
Speed, Malise, speed! such cause of haste 300
Thine active sinews never braced.
Bend 'gainst the steepy hill thy breast,
Burst down like torrent from its crest;
With short and springing footstep pass
The trembling bog and false morass;
Across the brook like roebuck bound,
And thread the brake like questing hound;
The crag is high, the scaur is deep,
Yet shrink not from the desperate leap:
Parched are thy burning lips and brow, 310
Yet by the fountain pause not now;
Herald of battle, fate, and fear,
Stretch onward in thy fleet career!
The wounded hind thou track'st not now,
Pursuest not maid through greenwood bough,
Nor pliest thou now thy flying pace
With rivals in the mountain race;
But danger, death, and warrior deed
Are in thy course—speed, Malise, speed!

XIV

Fast as the fatal symbol flies, 320
In arms the huts and hamlets rise;
From winding glen, from upland brown,
They poured each hardy tenant down.
Nor slacked the messenger his pace;

He showed the sign, he named the place,
 And, pressing forward like the wind,
 Left clamour and surprise behind.
 The fisherman forsook the strand,
 The swarthy smith took dirk and brand;
 With changed cheer, the mower blithe 330
 Left in the half-cut swath his scythe;
 The herds without a keeper strayed,
 The plough was in mid-furrow stayed,
 The falconer tossed his hawk away,
 The hunter left the stag at bay;
 Prompt at the signal of alarms,
 Each son of Alpine rushed to arms;
 So swept the tumult and affray
 Along the margin of Achray.
 Alas, thou lovely lake! that e'er 340
 Thy banks should echo sounds of fear!
 The rocks, the bosky thickets, sleep
 So stilly on thy bosom deep,
 The lark's blithe carol from the cloud
 Seems for the scene too gaily loud.

XV

Speed, Malise, speed! The lake is past,
 Duncraggan's huts appear at last,
 And peep, like moss-grown rocks, half seen,
 Half hidden in the copse so green;
 There mayst thou rest, thy labour done, 350
 Their lord shall speed the signal on.—
 As stoops the hawk upon his prey,
 The henchman shot him down the way.
 What woful accents load the gale?
 The funeral yell, the female wail!
 A gallant hunter's sport is o'er,
 A valiant warrior fights no more.
 Who, in the battle or the chase,

At Roderick's side shall fill his place!—
Within the hall, where torch's ray
Supplies the excluded beams of day,
Lies Duncan on his lowly bier,
And o'er him streams his widow's tear.
His stripling son stands mournful by,
His youngest weeps, but knows not why;
The village maids and matrons round
The dismal coronach resound.

360

XVI

CORONACH

He is gone on the mountain,
He is lost to the forest,
Like a summer-dried fountain,
When our need was the sorest.
The font, reappearing,
From the rain-drops shall borrow,
But to us comes no cheering,
To Duncan no morrow!

370

The hand of the reaper
Takes the ears that are hoary,
But the voice of the weeper
Wails manhood in glory.
The autumn winds rushing
Waft the leaves that are searest,
But our flower was in flushing,
When blighting was nearest.

380

Fleet foot on the correi,
Sage counsel in cumber,
Red hand in the foray,
How sound is thy slumber!

Like the dew on the mountain,
Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,
Thou art gone, and forever!

390

XVII

See Stumah, who, the bier beside,
His master's corpse with wonder eyed,
Poor Stumah! whom his least halloo
Could send like lightning o'er the dew,
Bristles his crest, and points his ears,
As if some stranger step he hears.
'Tis not a mourner's muffled tread,
Who comes to sorrow o'er the dead,
But headlong haste or deadly fear
Urge the precipitate career.
All stand aghast:—unheeding all,
The henchman bursts into the hall;
Before the dead man's bier he stood,
Held forth the Cross besmeared with blood;
"The muster-place is Lanrick mead;
Speed forth the signal! clansmen, speed!"

400

XVIII

Angus, the heir of Duncan's line,
Sprung forth and seized the fatal sign.
In haste the stripling to his side
His father's dirk and broadsword tied;
But when he saw his mother's eye
Watch him in speechless agony,
Back to her opened arms he flew,
Pressed on her lips a fond adieu,—
"Alas!" she sobbed,—“and yet be gone,
And speed thee forth, like Duncan's son!”
One look he cast upon the bier,
Dashed from his eye the gathering tear.

410

Breathed deep to clear his labouring breast, 420
And tossed aloft his bonnet crest,
Then, like the high-bred colt when, freed,
First he essays his fire and speed,
He vanished, and o'er moor and moss
Sped forward with the Fiery Cross.
Suspended was the widow's tear
While yet his footsteps she could hear;
And when she marked the henchman's eye
Wet with unwonted sympathy,
"Kinsman," she said, "his race is run 430
That should have sped thine errand on;
The oak has fallen,—the sapling bough
Is all Duncraggan's shelter now.
Yet trust I well, his duty done,
The orphan's God will guard my son.—
And you, in many a danger true,
At Duncan's hest your blades that drew,
To arms, and guard that orphan's head!
Let babes and women wail the dead."
Then weapon-clang and martial call 440
Resounded through the funeral hall,
While from the walls the attendant band
Snatched sword and targe with hurried hand;
And short and flitting energy
Glanced from the mourner's sunken eye,
As if the sounds to warrior dear
Might rouse her Duncan from his bier.
But faded soon that borrowed force;
Grief claimed his right, and tears their course.

XIX

Benledi saw the Cross of Fire, 450
It glanced like lightning up Strath-Ire.
O'er dale and hill the summons flew,
Nor rest nor pause young Angus knew;

The tear that gathered in his eye
He left the mountain-breeze to dry;
Until, where Teith's young waters roll
Betwixt him and a wooded knoll
That graced the sable strath with green,
The chapel of Saint Bride was seen.
Swoln was the stream, remote the bridge, 460
But Angus paused not on the edge;
Though the dark waves danced dizzily,
Though reeled his sympathetic eye,
He dashed amid the torrent's roar:
His right hand high the crosslet bore,
His left the pole-axe grasped, to guide
And stay his footing in the tide.
He stumbled twice,—the foam splashed high,
With hoarser swell the stream raced by;
And had he fallen,—forever there, 470
Farewell Duncraggan's orphan heir!
But still, as if in parting life,
Firmer he grasped the Cross of strife,
Until the opposing bank he gained,
And up the chapel pathway strained.

XX

A blithesome rout that morning-tide
Had sought the chapel of Saint Bride.
Her troth Tombea's Mary gave
To Norman, heir of Armandave,
And, issuing from the Gothic arch, 480
The bridal now resumed their march.
In rude but glad procession came
Bonneted sire and coif-clad dame;
And plaided youth, with jest and jeer,
Which snooded maiden would not hear;
And children, that, unwitting why,

Lent the gay shout their shrilly cry;
And minstrels, that in measures vied
Before the young and bonny bride,
Whose downcast eye and cheek disclose
The tear and blush of morning rose.
With virgin step and bashful hand
She held the kerchief's snowy band.
The gallant bridegroom by her side
Beheld his prize with victor's pride,
And the glad mother in her ear
Was closely whispering word of cheer.

490

XXI

Who meets them at the churchyard gate?
The messenger of fear and fate!
Haste in his hurried accent lies,
And grief is swimming in his eyes.
All dripping from the recent flood,
Panting and travel-soiled he stood,
The fatal sign of fire and sword
Held forth, and spoke the appointed word:
"The muster-place is Lanrick mead;
Speed forth the signal! Norman, speed!"
And must he change so soon the hand
Just linked to his by holy band,
For the fell Cross of blood and brand?
And must the day so blithe that rose,
And promised rapture in the close,
Before its setting hour, divide
The bridegroom from the plighted bride?
O fatal doom!—it must! it must!
Clan-Alpine's cause, her Chieftain's trust,
Her summons dread, brook no delay;
Stretch to the race,—away! away!

500

510

XXII

Yet slow he laid his plaid aside,
 And lingering eyed his lovely bride, 520
 Until he saw the starting tear
 Speak woe he might not stop to cheer;
 Then, trusting not a second look,
 In haste he sped him up the brook,
 Nor backward glanced till on the heath
 Where Lubnaig's lake supplies the Teith.
 What in the racer's bosom stirred?
 The sickening pang of hope deferred,
 And memory with a torturing train 530
 Of all his morning visions vain.
 Mingled with love's impatience, came
 The manly thirst for martial fame;
 The stormy joy of mountaineers
 Ere yet they rush upon the spears;
 And zeal for Clan and Chieftain burning,
 And hope, from well-fought field returning,
 With war's red honours on his crest,
 To clasp his Mary to his breast.
 Stung by such thoughts, o'er bank and brae,
 Like fire from flint he glanced away, 540
 While high resolve and feeling strong
 Burst into voluntary song.

XXIII

SONG.

The heath this night must be my bed,
 The bracken curtain for my head,
 My lullaby the warder's tread,
 Far, far, from love and thee, Mary;
 To-morrow eve, more stilly laid,
 My couch may be my bloody plaid,
 My vesper song thy wail, sweet maid;
 It will not waken me, Mary! 550

I may not, dare not, fancy now
The grief that clouds thy lovely brow,
I dare not think upon thy vow,
 And all it promised me, Mary.
No fond regret must Norman know;
When bursts Clan-Alpine on the foe,
His heart must be like bended bow,
 His foot like arrow free, Mary.

A time will come with feeling fraught,
For, if I fall in battle fought,
Thy hapless lover's dying thought
 Shall be a thought on thee, Mary.
And if returned from conquered foes,
How blithely will the evening close,
How sweet the linnet sing repose,
 To my young bride and me, Mary!

560

XXIV

Not faster o'er thy heathery braes,
Balquidder, speeds the midnight blaze,
Rushing in conflagration strong
Thy deep ravines and dells along,
Wrapping thy cliffs in purple glow,
And reddening the dark lakes below;
Nor faster speeds it, nor so far,
As o'er thy heaths the voice of war.
The signal roused to martial coil
The sullen margin of Loch Voil,
Waked still Loch Doine, and to the source
Alarmed, Balvaig, thy swampy course;
Thence southward turned its rapid road
Adown Strath-Gartney's valley broad,
Till rose in arms each man might claim
A portion in Clan-Alpine's name,

570

580

From the gray sire, whose trembling hand
Could hardly buckle on his brand,
To the raw boy, whose shaft and bow
Were yet scarce terror to the crow.
Each valley, each sequestered glen,
Mustered its little horde of men,
That met as torrents from the height
In Highland dales their streams unite,
Still gathering, as they pour along,
A voice more loud, a tide more strong,
Till at the rendezvous they stood
By hundreds prompt for blows and blood,
Each trained to arms since life began,
Owning no tie but to his clan,
No oath but by his Chieftain's hand,
No law but Roderick Dhu's command.

590

XXV

That summer morn had Roderick Dhu
Surveyed the skirts of Benvenue,
And sent his scouts o'er hill and heath,
To view the frontiers of Menteith.
All backward came with news of truce;
Still lay each martial Græme and Bruce,
In Rednock courts no horsemen wait,
No banner waved on Cardross gate,
On Duchray's towers no beacon shone,
Nor scared the herons from Loch Con;
All seemed at peace.—Now wot ye why
The Chieftain with such anxious eye,
Ere to the muster he repair,
This western frontier scanned with care?—
In Benvenue's most darksome cleft,
A fair though cruel pledge was left;
For Douglas, to his promise true,
That morning from the isle withdrew,

600

610

And in a deep sequestered dell
Had sought a low and lonely cell.
By many a bard in Celtic tongue
Has Coir-nan-Uriskin been sung;
A softer name the Saxons gave,
And called the grot the Goblin Cave.

620

XXVI

It was a wild and strange retreat,
As e'er was trod by outlaw's feet.
The dell, upon the mountain's crest,
Yawned like a gash on warrior's breast;
Its trench had stayed full many a rock,
Hurled by primeval earthquake shock
From Benvenue's gray summit wild,
And here, in random ruin piled,
They frowned incumbent o'er the spot,
And formed the rugged sylvan grot.
The oak and birch with mingled shade
At noontide there a twilight made,
Unless when short and sudden shone
Some straggling beam on cliff or stone,
With such a glimpse as prophet's eye
Gains on thy depth, Futurity.
No murmur waked the solemn still,
Save tinkling of a fountain rill;
But when the wind chafed with the lake,
A sullen sound would upward break,
With dashing hollow voice, that spoke
The incessant war of wave and rock.
Suspended cliffs with hideous sway
Seemed nodding o'er the cavern gray.
From such a den the wolf had sprung,
In such the wild-cat leaves her young;
Yet Douglas and his daughter fair
Sought for a space their safety there.

630

640

650

Gray Superstition's whisper dread
Debarred the spot to vulgar tread;
For there, she said, did fays resort,
And satyrs hold their sylvan court,
By moonlight tread their mystic maze,
And blast the rash beholder's gaze.

XXVII

Now eve, with western shadows long,
Floated on Katrine bright and strong,
When Roderick with a chosen few
Repassed the heights of Benvenue. 88
Above the Goblin Cave they go,
Through the wild pass of Beal-nam-bo;
The prompt retainers speed before,
To launch the shallop from the shore,
For 'cross Loch Katrine lies his way
To view the passes of Achray,
And place his clansmen in array.
Yet lags the Chief in musing mind,
Unwonted sight, his men behind. 670
A single page, to bear his sword,
Alone attended on his lord;
The rest their way through thickets break,
And soon await him by the lake.
It was a fair and gallant sight,
To view them from the neighbouring height,
By the low-levelled sunbeam's light!
For strength and stature, from the clan
Each warrior was a chosen man,
As even afar might well be seen,
By their proud step and martial mien. 880
Their feathers dance, their tartans float,
Their targets gleam, as by the boat
A wild and warlike group they stand,
That well became such mountain-strand.

XXVIII

Their Chief with step reluctant still
 Was lingering on the craggy hill,
 Hard by where turned apart the road
 To Douglas's obscure abode.
 It was but with that dawning morn
 That Roderick Dhu had proudly sworn 690
 To drown his love in war's wild roar,
 Nor think of Ellen Douglas more;
 But he who stems a stream with sand,
 And fetters flame with flaxen band,
 Has yet a harder task to prove,—
 By firm resolve to conquer love!
 Eve finds the Chief, like restless ghost,
 Still hovering near his treasure lost;
 For though his haughty heart deny 700
 A parting meeting to his eye,
 Still fondly strains his anxious ear
 The accents of her voice to hear,
 And inly did he curse the breeze
 That waked to sound the rustling trees.
 But hark! what mingles in the strain?
 It is the harp of Allan-bane,
 That wakes its measures slow and high,
 Attuned to sacred minstrelsy.
 What melting voice attends the strings?
 'Tis Ellen, or an angel, sings. 710

XXIX

HYMN TO THE VIRGIN

Ave Maria! maiden mild!

Listen to a maiden's prayer!

Thou canst hear though from the wild,

Thou canst save amid despair.

Safe may we sleep beneath thy care,
 Though banished, outcast, and reviled—
 Maiden! hear a maiden's prayer;
 Mother, hear a suppliant child!

Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! undefiled!

The flinty couch we now must share
 Shall seem with down of eider piled,
 If thy protection hover there.
 The murky cavern's heavy air
 Shall breathe of balm if thou hast smiled;
 Then, Maiden! hear a maiden's prayer,
 Mother, list a suppliant child!

720

Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! stainless styled!

Foul demons of the earth and air,
 From this their wonted haunt exiled,
 Shall flee before thy presence fair.
 We bow us to our lot of care,
 Beneath thy guidance reconciled:
 Hear for a maid a maiden's prayer,
 And for a father hear a child!

730

Ave Maria!

XXX

Died on the harp the closing hymn,—
 Unmoved in attitude and limb,
 As listening still, Clan-Alpine's lord—
 Stood leaning on his heavy sword,
 Until the page with humble sign
 Twice pointed to the sun's decline.
 Then while his plaid he round him cast,
 "It is the last time—'tis the last,"
 He muttered thrice,—“the last time e'er

740

That angel-voice shall Roderick hear!"
It was a goading thought,—his stride
Hied hastier down the mountain-side:
Sullen he flung him in the boat,
An instant 'cross the lake it shot.
They landed in that silvery bay,
And eastward held their hasty way,
Till, with the latest beams of light,
The band arrived on Lanrick height,
Where mustered in the vale below
Clan-Alpine's men in martial show.

750

XXXI

A various scene the clansmen made:
Some sat, some stood, some slowly strayed;
But most, with mantles folded round,
Were crouched to rest upon the ground,
Scare to be known by curious eye
From the deep heather where they lie,
So well was matched the tartan screen
With heath-bell dark and brackens green;
Unless where, here and there, a blade
Or lance's point a glimmer made,
Like glow-worm twinkling through the shade.
But when, advancing through the gloom,
They saw the Chieftain's eagle plume,
Their shout of welcome, shrill and wide,
Shook the steep mountain's steady side.
Thrice it arose, and lake and fell
Three times returned the martial yell;
It died upon Bochastle's plain,
And Silence claimed her evening reign.

760

770

CANTO FOURTH

THE PROPHECY

I

“The rose is fairest when ’tis budding new,
And hope is brightest when it dawns from fears;
The rose is sweetest washed with morning dew,
And love is loveliest when embalmed in tears.
O wilding rose, whom fancy thus endears,
I bid your blossoms in my bonnet wave,
Emblem of hope and love through future years!”
Thus spoke young Norman, heir of Armandave,
What time the sun arose on Vennachar’s broad wave.

II

Such fond conceit, half said, half sung, 10
Love prompted to the bridegroom’s tongue.
All while he stripped the wild-rose spray,
His axe and bow beside him lay, *As he stood*
For on a pass ’twixt lake and wood
A wakeful sentinel he stood.
Hark!—on the rock a footstep rung,
And instant to his arms he sprung.
“Stand, or thou diest!—What, Malise?—soon
Art thou returned from Braes of Doune.
By thy keen step and glance I know, 15
Thou bring’st us tidings of the foe.”—
For while the Fiery Cross hied on,
On distant scout had Malise gone.—
“Where sleeps the Chief?” the henchman said.
“Apart, in yonder misty glade;

To his lone couch I'll be your guide."—
Then called a slumberer by his side,
And stirred him with his slackened bow,—
"Up, up, Glentarkin! rouse thee, ho!
We seek the Chieftain; on the track
Keep eagle watch till I come back."

30

III

Together up the pass they sped:
"What of the foeman?" Norman said.—
"Varying reports from near and far;
This certain,—that a band of war
Has for two days been ready boune,
At prompt command to march from Doune;
King James the while, with princely powers,
Holds revelry in Stirling towers.
Soon will this dark and gathering cloud
Speak on our glens in thunder loud.
Inured to bide such bitter bout,
The warrior's plaid may bear it out;
But, Norman, how wilt thou provide
A shelter for thy bonny bride?"—
"What! know ye not that Roderick's care
To the lone isle hath caused repair
Each maid and matron of the clan,
And every child and aged man
Unfit for arms; and given his charge,
Nor skiff nor shallop, boat nor barge,
Upon these lakes shall float at large,
But all beside the islet moor,
That such dear pledge may rest secure?"—

40

50

IV

"'Tis well advised,—the Chieftain's plan
Bespeaks the father of his clan.
But wherefore sleeps Sir Roderick Dhu

Apart from all his followers true?"
"It is because last evening-tide
Brian an augury hath tried,
Of that dread kind which must not be
Unless in dread extremity,
The Taghairm called; by which, afar,
Our sires foresaw the events of war.
Duncraggan's milk-white bull they slew,"—

60

MALISE

"Ah! well the gallant brute I knew!
The choicest of the prey we had
When swept our merry-men Gallangad.
His hide was snow, his horns were dark,
His red eye glowed like fiery spark;
So fierce, so tameless, and so fleet,
Sore did he cumber our retreat,
And kept our stoutest kerns in awe,
Even at the pass of Beal 'maha.
But steep and flinty was the road,
And sharp the hurrying pikeman's goad,
And when we came to Dennan's Row
A child might scathless stroke his brow."

70

V

NORMAN

"That bull was slain; his reeking hide
They stretched the cataract beside,
Whose waters their wild tumult toss
Adown the black and craggy boss
Of that huge cliff whose ample verge
Tradition calls the Hero's Targe.
Couched on a shelf beneath its brink,
Close where the thundering torrents sink,
Rocking beneath their headlong sway,
And drizzled by the ceaseless spray,

80

Midst groan of rock and roar of stream,
The wizard waits prophetic dream. 90
Nor distant rests the Chief;—but hush!
See, gliding slow through mist and bush,
The hermit gains yon rock, and stands
To gaze upon our slumbering bands.
Seems he not, Malise, like a ghost,
That hovers o'er a slaughtered host?
Or raven on the blasted oak,
That, watching while the deer is broke,
His morsel claims with sullen croak?"

MALISE

"Peace! peace! to other than to me 100
Thy words were evil augury;
But still I hold Sir Roderick's blade
Clan-Alpine's omen and her aid,
Not aught that, gleaned from heaven or hell,
Yon fiend-begotten Monk can tell.
The Chieftain joins him, see—and now
Together they descend the brow."

VI

And, as they came, with Alpine's Lord
The Hermit Monk held solemn word:—
"Roderick! it is a fearful strife, 110
For man endowed with mortal life,
Whose shroud of sentient clay can still
Feel feverish pang and fainting chill,
Whose eye can stare in stony trance,
Whose hair can rouse like warrior's lance,—
'Tis hard for such to view, unfurled,
The curtain of the future world.
Yet, witness every quaking limb,
My sunken pulse, mine eyeballs dim,
My soul with harrowing anguish torn, 120

This for my Chieftain have I borne!—
 The shapes that sought my fearful couch
 A human tongue may ne'er avouch;
 No mortal man—save he, who, bred
 Between the living and the dead,
 Is gifted beyond nature's law—
 Had e'er survived to say he saw.
 At length the fateful answer came
 In characters of living flame!
 Not spoke in word, nor blazed in scroll
 But borne and branded on my soul:—
 WHICH SPILLS THE FOREMOST FOEMAN'S LIFE,
 THAT PARTY CONQUERS IN THE STRIFE."

130

VII

"Thanks, Brain, for thy zeal and care!
 Good is thine augury, and fair.
 Clan-Alpine ne'er in battle stood
 But first our broadswords tasted blood.
 A surer victim still I know,
 Self-offered to the auspicious blow;
 A spy has sought my land this morn,—
 No eve shall witness his return!
 My followers guard each pass's mouth,
 To east, to westward, and to south;
 Red Murdoch, bribed to be his guide,
 Has charge to lead his steps aside,
 Till in deep path or dingle brown
 He light on those shall bring him down.—
 But see, who comes his news to show!
 Malise! what tidings of the foe?"

140

VIII

"At Doune, o'er many a spear and glaive
 Two Barons proud their banners wave.
 I saw the Moray's silver star,

150

And marked the sable pale of Mar."
 "By Alpine's soul, high tidings those!
 I love to hear of worthy foes.
 When move they on?" "To-morrow's noon
 Will see them here for battle bouné."
 "Then shall it see a meeting stern!
 But, for the place,—say, couldst thou learn
 Nought of the friendly clans of Earn? 160
 Strengthened by them, we well might bide
 The battle on Benledi's side.
 Thou couldst not?—well! Clan-Alpine's men
 Shall man the Trosachs' shaggy glen;
 Within Loch Katrine's gorge we'll fight,
 All in our maids' and matrons' sight,
 Each for his hearth and household fire,
 Father for child, and son for sire,
 Lover for maid beloved!—But why—
 Is it the breeze affects mine eye? 170
 Or dost thou come, ill-omened tear!
 A messenger of doubt or fear?
 No! sooner may the Saxon lance
 Unfix Benledi from his stance,
 Than doubt or terror can pierce through
 The unyielding heart of Roderick Dhu!
 'Tis stubborn as his trusty targe.
 Each to his post!—all know their charge."
 The pibroch sounds, the bands advance,
 The broadswords gleam, the banners dance, 180
 Obedient to the Chieftain's glance.—
 I turn me from the martial roar,
 And seek Coir-Uriskin once more.

IX

Where is the Douglas?—he is gone;
 And Ellen sits on the gray stone
 Fast by the cave, and makes her moan,

While vainly Allan's words of cheer
 Are poured on her unheeding ear.
 "He will return—dear lady, trust!—
 With joy return;—he will—he must.
 Well was it time to seek afar
 Some refuge from impending war,
 When e'en Clan-Alpine's rugged swarm
 Are cowed by the approaching storm.
 I saw their boats with many a light,
 Floating the livelong yesternight,
 Shifting like flashes darted forth
 By the red streamers of the north;
 I marked at morn how close they ride,
 Thick moored by the lone islet's side,
 Like wild ducks couching in the fen
 When stoops the hawk upon the glen.
 Since this rude race dare not abide
 The peril on the mainland side,
 Shall not thy noble father's care
 Some safe retreat for thee prepare?"

190

200

X

ELLEN

150

150

"No, Allan, no! (Pretext so kind—
 My wakeful terrors could not blind.
 When in such tender tone, yet grave,
 Douglas a parting blessing gave,
 The tear that glistened in his eye
 Drowned not his purpose fixed and high.
 My soul, though feminine and weak,
 Can image his; e'en as the lake,
 Itself disturbed by slightest stroke,
 Reflects the invulnerable rock.
 He hears report of battle rife,
 He deems himself the cause of strife.

210

I saw him redden when the theme
 Turned, Allan, on thine idle dream 220
 Of Malcolm Græme in fetters bound, *chains*
 Which I, thou saidst, about him wound.
 Think'st thou he trowed thine omen aught?
 O no! 'twas apprehensive thought
 For the kind youth,—for Roderick too—
 Let me be just—that friend so true;
 In danger both, and in our cause!
 Minstrel, the Douglas dare not pause.
 Why else that solemn warning given,
 'If not on earth, we meet in heaven!' 230
 Why else, to Cambus-Kenneth's fane,
 If eve return him not again,
 Am I to hie and make me known?
 Alas! he goes to Scotland's throne,
 Buys his friends' safety with his own;
 He goes to do—what I had done,
 Had Douglas' daughter been his son!"

XI

No. "Nay, lovely Ellen!—dearest, nay!
 If aught should his return delay,
 He only named yon holy fane 240
 As fitting place to meet again.
 Be sure he's safe; and for the Græme,—
 Heaven's blessing on his gallant name!—
 My visioned sight may yet prove true,
 Nor bode of ill to him or you.
 When did my gifted dream beguile?
 Think of the stranger at the isle,
 And think upon the harpings slow
 That presaged this approaching woe!
 Sooth was my prophecy of fear; 250
 Believe it when it augurs cheer.
 Would we had left this dismal spot!

Ill luck still haunts a fairy grot.
Of such a wondrous tale I know—
Dear lady, change that look of woe,
My harp was wont thy grief to cheer.”

ELLEN

“Well, be it as thou wilt; I hear,
But cannot stop the bursting tear.”—
The Minstrel tried his simple art,
But distant far was Ellen’s heart.

260

XII

BALLAD

ALICE BRAND

Turkey Merry it is in the good greenwood,

~~When the mavis and merle are singing,~~ *Blackbird*

When the deer sweeps by, and the hounds are in cry,
And the hunter’s horn is ringing.

“O Alice Brand, my native land

Is lost for love of you;

And we must hold by wood and ~~wold~~ *open country*

As outlaws wont to do.

“O Alice, ’twas all for thy locks so bright,

And ’twas all for thine eyes so blue,

That on the night of our luckless flight

Thy brother bold I slew.

270

“Now must I teach to ~~hew~~ the beech ~~cut~~

The hand that held the ~~glaiue~~ *knife*

For leaves to spread our lowly bed,

And stakes to fence our cave.

ornament "And for vest of pall thy fingers small,
 That wont on harp to stray,
 of rich A cloak must [shear from the slaughtered deer, ~~skin~~ ^{skin} ^{the} ^{Deer}
 cloth. To keep the cold away." 280

"O Richard! if my brother died,
 'Twas but a fatal chance;
 For darkling was the battle tried,
 And fortune sped the lance.

of the "If pall and vair no more I wear,
 squirrel Nor thou the crimson sheen,
 As warm, we'll say, is the russet gray,
 As gay the forest-green.

"And, Richard, if our lot be hard,
 And lost thy native land,
 Still Alice has her own Richard,
 And he his Alice Brand."

290

XIII

BALLAD CONTINUED

supply 'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good greenwood;
 So blithe Lady Alice is singing;
 On the beech's pride, and oak's brown side,
 Lord Richard's axe is ringing.

Lord Up spoke the moody Elfin King, ^{king of fairies}
 Who woned within the hill,—
 Like wind in the porch of a ruined church,
 His voice was ghostly shrill.

300

"Why sounds yon stroke on beech and oak,
 Our moonlight circle's screen?
 Or who comes here to chase the deer,
 Beloved of our Elfin Queen? ^{fairies}
 Or who may dare on wold to wear
 The fairies' fatal green?

“Up, Urgan, up! to yon mortal hie, go
 For thou wert christened man;
 For cross or sign thou wilt not fly,
 For muttered word or ban.

310

“Lay on him the curse of the withered heart,
 The curse of the sleepless eye;
 Till he wish and pray that his life would part,
 Nor yet find leave to die.”

XIV

BALLAD CONTINUED

’Tis merry, ’tis merry, in good greenwood,
 Though the birds have stilled their singing;
 The evening blaze doth Alice raise,
 And Richard is fagots bringing. candles

Up Urgan starts, that hideous dwarf,
 Before Lord Richard stands,
 And, as he crossed and blessed himself,
 “I fear not sign,” quothe the grisly elf, said
 “That is made with bloody hands.”

320

But out then spoke she, Alice Brand,
 That woman void of fear,— early
 “And if there’s blood upon his hand,
 ’Tis but the blood of deer.”

“Now loud thou liest, thou bold of mood!
 It cleaves unto his hand,
 The stain of thine own kindly blood,
 The blood of Ethert Brand.”

330

Then forward stepped she, Alice Brand,
 And made the holy sign,—
 “And if there’s blood on Richard’s hand,
 A spotless hand is mine.

~~beetle~~ "And I conjure thee, demon elf,
By Him whom demons fear,
To show us whence thou art thyself,
And what thine errand here?"

XV

BALLAD CONTINUED

"'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in Fairy-land, 340
When fairy birds are singing,
When the court doth ride by their monarch's side,
With bit and bridle ringing:

"And gayly shines the Fairy-land—
But all is glistening show,
Like the idle gleam that December's beam
Can dart on ice and snow.

"And fading, like that varied gleam,
Is our inconstant shape,
Who now like knight and lady seem, 350
And now like dwarf and ape.

"It was between the night and day,
When the Fairy King has power,
That I sunk down in a sinful fray,
And 'twixt life and death was snatched away
To the joyless Elfin bower.

"But wist I of a woman bold,
Who thrice my brow durst sign,
I might regain my mortal mould,
As fair a form as thine." 360

She crossed him once—she crossed him twice—
That lady was so brave;
The fouler grew his goblin hue,
The darker grew the cave.

She crossed him thrice, that lady bold;
 He rose beneath her hand
 The fairest knight on Scottish mould,
 Her brother, Ethert Brand!

Merry it is in good greenwood,
 When the mavis and merle are singing,
 But merrier were they in Dunfermline gray,
 When all the bells were ringing.

370

XVI

Just as the minstrel sounds were stayed,
 A stranger climbed the steepy glade; ~~His~~
 His martial step, his stately mien,
 His hunting-suit of Lincoln green,
 His eagle glance, remembrance claims—
 'Tis Snowdoun's Knight, 'tis James Fitz-James.
 Ellen beheld as in a dream,
 Then, starting, scarce suppressed a scream:
 "O stranger! in such hour of fear
 What evil hap has brought thee here?"
 "An evil hap how can it be
 That bids me look again on thee?
 By promise bound, my former guide
 Met me betimes this morning-tide,
 And marshalled over bank and bourne
 The happy path of my return."
 "The happy path!—what! said he naught
 Of war, of battle to be fought,
 Of guarded pass?" "No, by my faith!
 Nor saw I aught could augur scathe."
 "O haste thee, Allan, to the kern: ~~light they are not away~~
 Yonder his tartans I discern;
 Learn thou his purpose, and conjure
 That he will guide the stranger sure!—

380

390

What prompted thee, unhappy man?
 The meanest serf in Roderick's clan
 Had not been bribed, by love or fear,
 Unknown to him to guide thee here."

400

XVII

"Sweet Ellen, dear my life must be,
 Since it is worthy care from thee;
 Yet life I hold but idle breath
 When love or honour's weighed with death.
 Then let me profit by my chance,
 And speak my purpose bold at once.
 I come to bear thee from a wild
 Where ne'er before such blossom smiled,
 By this soft hand to lead thee far
 From frantic scenes of feud and war.
 Near Bochastle my horses wait;
 They bear us soon to Stirling gate.
 I'll place thee in a lovely bower,
 I'll guard thee like a tender flower—"
 "O hush, Sir Knight! 'twere female art,
 To say I do not read thy heart;
 Too much, before, my selfish ear
 Was idly soothed my praise to hear.
 That fatal bait hath lured thee back,
 In deathful hour, o'er dangerous track;
 And now, O how, can I atone for,
 The wreck my vanity brought on!—
 One way remains—I'll tell him all—
 Yes! struggling bosom, forth it shall!
 Thou, whose light folly bears the blame,
 Buy thine own pardon with thy shame!
 But first—my father is a man
 Outlawed and exiled, under ban;
 The price of blood is on his head,
 With me 'twere infamy to wed.

410

420

430

Still wouldst thou speak?—then hear the truth!
 Fitz-James, there is a noble youth—
 If yet he is!—exposed for me
 And mine to dread extremity—
 Thou hast the secret of my heart;
 Forgive, be generous, and depart!”

XVIII

Fitz-James knew every wily train
 A lady's fickle heart to gain,
 But here he knew and felt them vain. 440
 There shot no glance from Ellen's eye,
 To give her steadfast speech the lie;
 In maiden confidence she stood,
 Though mantled in her cheek the blood,
 And told her love with such a sigh
 Of deep and hopeless agony,
 As death had sealed her Malcolm's doom
 And she sat sorrowing on his tomb.
 Hope vanished from Fitz-James's eye,
 But not with hope fled sympathy. 450
 He proffered to attend her side,
 As brother would a sister guide.
 “O little know'st thou Roderick's heart!
 Safer for both we go apart.
 O haste thee, and from Allan learn
 If thou mayst trust yon wily kern.”
 With hand upon his forehead laid,
 The conflict of his mind to shade,
 A parting step or two he made;
 Then, as some thought had crossed his brain,
 He paused, and turned, and came again. 460

XIX

“Hear, lady, yet a parting word!—
 It chanced in fight that my poor sword
 Preserved the life of Scotland's lord.

This ring the grateful Monarch gave,
And bade, when I had boon to crave,
To bring it back, and boldly claim
The recompense that I would name.
Ellen, I am no courtly lord,
But one who lives by lance and sword,
Whose castle is his helm and shield, 470
His lordship the embattled field.
What from a prince can I demand,
Who neither reck of state nor land?
Ellen, thy hand—the ring is thine;
Each guard and usher knows the sign.
Seek thou the King without delay;
This signet shall secure thy way:
And claim thy suit, whate'er it be,
As ransom of his pledge to me.”
He placed the golden circlet on, 480
Paused—kissed her hand—and then was gone.
The aged Minstrel stood aghast,
So hastily Fitz-James shot past.
He joined his guide, and wending down
The ridges of the mountain brown,
Across the stream they took their way
That joins Loch Katrine to Achray.

XX

All in the Trosachs' glen was still,
Noontide was sleeping on the hill:
Sudden his guide whooped loud and high— 490
“Murdoch! was that a signal cry?”—
He stammered forth, “I shout to scare
Yon raven from his dainty fare.”
He looked—he knew the raven's prey,
His own brave steed: “Ah! gallant gray!
For thee—for me, perchance—'twere well
We ne'er had seen the Trosachs' dell.—
Murdoch, move first—but silently;

Whistle or whoop, and thou shalt die!"
 Jealous and sullen on they fared,
 Each silent, each upon his guard.

500

XXI

Now wound the path its dizzy ledge
 Around a precipice's edge,
 When lo! a wasted female form,
 Blighted by wrath of sun and storm,
 In tattered weeds and wild array,
 Stood on a cliff beside the way,
 And glancing round her restless eye,
 Upon the wood, the rock, the sky,
 Seemed naught to mark, yet all to spy.
 Her brow was wreathed with gaudy broom;
 With gesture wild she waved a plume
 Of feathers, which the eagles fling
 To crag and cliff from dusky wing;
 Such spoils her desperate step had sought,
 Where scarce was footing for the goat.
 The tartan plaid she first descried,
 And shrieked till all the rocks replied;
 As loud she laughed when near they drew,
 For then the Lowland garb she knew;
 And then her hands she wildly wrung,
 And then she wept, and then she sung—
 She sung!—the voice, in better time,
 Perchance to harp or lute might chime;
 And now, though strained and roughened, still
 Rung wildly sweet to dale and hill.

510

520

XXII

SONG

"They bid me sleep, they bid me pray,
 They say my brain is warped and wrung—
 I cannot sleep on Highland brae,
 I cannot pray in Highland tongue.

530

But were I now where Allan glides,
Or heard my native Devan's tides,
So sweetly would I rest, and pray
That Heaven would close my wintry day!

" 'Twas thus my hair they bade me braid,
They made me to the church repair;
It was my bridal morn they said,
And my true love would meet me there.
But woe betide the cruel guile
That drowned in blood the morning smile! 540
And woe betide the fairy dream!
I only waked to sob and scream."

XXIII

"Who is this maid? what means her lay?
She hovers o'er the hollow way,
And flutters wide her mantle gray,
As the lone heron spreads his wing,
By twilight, o'er a haunted spring."
" 'Tis Blanche of Devan," Murdoch said,
"A crazed and captive Lowland maid,
Ta'en on the morn she was a bride, 550
When Roderick forayed Devan-side.
The gay bridegroom resistance made,
And felt our Chief's unconquered blade.
I marvel she is now at large,
But oft she 'scapes from Maudlin's charge.—
Hence, brain-sick fool!"—He raised his bow:—
"Now, if thou strik'st her but one blow,
I'll pitch thee from the cliff as far
As ever peasant pitched a bar!"
"Thanks, champion, thanks!" the Maniac cried, 560
And pressed her to Fitz-James's side.
"See the gray pennons I prepare,
To seek my true love through the air!
I will not lend that savage groom,

To break his fall, one downy plume!
 No!—deep amid disjointed stones,
 The wolves shall batten on his bones,
 And then shall his detested plaid,
 By bush and brier in mid-air stayed,
 Wave forth a banner fair and free,
 Meet signal for their revelry.”

570

XXIV

“Hush thee, poor maiden, and be still!”
 “O! thou look’st kindly, and I will.
 Mine eye has dried and wasted been,
 But still it loves the Lincoln green;
 And, though mine ear is all unstrung,
 Still, still it loves the Lowland tongue.
 ‘For O my sweet William was forester true,
 He stole poor Blanche’s heart away!
 His coat it was all of the greenwood hue,
 And so blithely he trilled the Lowland lay!’

580

“It was not that I meant to tell . . .
 But thou art wise and guessest well.”
 Then, in a low and broken tone,
 And hurried note, the song went on.
 Still on the Clansman fearfully
 She fixed her apprehensive eye,
 Then turned it on the Knight, and then
 Her look glanced wildly o’er the glen.

XXV

“The toils are pitched, and the stakes are set,—
 Ever sing merrily, merrily;
 The bows they bend, and the knives they whet,
 Hunters live so cheerily.

590

“It was a stag, a stag of ten,
Bearing its branches sturdily;
He came stately down the glen,—
Ever sing hardily, hardily.

“It was there he met with a wounded doe,
She was bleeding deathfully;
She warned him of the toils below,
O, so faithfully, faithfully!

600

“He had an eye, and he could heed,—
Ever sing warily, warily;
He had a foot, and he could speed,—
Hunters watch so narrowly.”

XXVI

Fitz-James's mind was passion-tossed,
When Ellen's hints and fears were lost;
But Murdoch's shout suspicion wrought,
And Blanche's song conviction brought.
Not like a stag that spies the snare,
But lion of the hunt aware,
He waved at once his blade on high,
“Disclose thy treachery, or die!”
Forth at full speed the Clansman flew,
But in his race his bow he drew.
The shaft just grazed Fitz-James's crest,
And thrilled in Blanche's faded breast.—
Murdoch of Alpine! prove thy speed,
For ne'er had Alpine's son such need;
With heart of fire, and foot of wind,
The fierce avenger is behind!
Fate judges of the rapid strife—
The forfeit death—the prize is life;
Thy kindred ambush lies before,

610

620

Close couched upon the heathery moor;
Them couldst thou reach!—it may not be—
Thine ambushed kin thou ne'er shalt see,
The fiery Saxon gains on thee!—
Resistless speeds the deadly thrust,
As lightning strikes the pine to dust;
With foot and hand Fitz-James must strain
Ere he can win his blade again.
Bent o'er the fallen with falcon eye,
He grimly smiled to see him die,
Then slower wended back his way,
Where the poor maiden bleeding lay.

630

XXVII

She sat beneath the birchen tree,
Her elbow resting on her knee;
She had withdrawn the fatal shaft,
And gazed on it, and feebly laughed;
Her wreath of broom and feathers gray,
Daggled with blood, beside her lay.
The Knight to stanch the life-stream tried,—
“Stranger, it is in vain!” she cried.
“This hour of death has given me more
Of reason’s power than years before;
For, as these ebbing veins decay,
My frenzied visions fade away.
A helpless injured wretch I die,
And something tells me in thine eye
That thou wert mine avenger born.—
Seest thou this tress?—O, still I’ve worn
This little tress of yellow hair,
Through danger, frenzy, and despair!
It once was bright and clear as thine,
But blood and tears have dimmed its shine.
I will not tell thee when ’twas shred,
Nor from what guiltless victim’s head,—

640

650

My brain would turn!—but it shall wave
 Like plumage on thy helmet brave, 660
 Till sun and wind shall bleach the stain,
 And thou wilt bring it me again.
 I waver still.—O God! more bright
 Let reason beam her parting light!—
 O, by thy knighthood's honoured sign,
 And for thy life preserved by mine,
 When thou shalt see a darksome man,
 Who boasts him Chief of Alpine's Clan,
 With tartans broad and shadowy plume, 670
 And hand of blood, and brow of gloom,
 Be thy heart bold, thy weapon strong,
 And wreak poor Blanche of Devan's wrong!—
 They watch for thee by pass and fell . . .
 Avoid the path . . . O God! . . . farewell."

XXVIII

A kindly heart had brave Fitz-James;
 Fast poured his eyes at pity's claims;
 And now, with mingled grief and ire,
 He saw the murdered maid expire.
 "God, in my need, be my relief,
 As I wreak this on yonder Chief!" 680
 A lock from Blanche's tresses fair
 He blended with her bridegroom's hair;
 The mingled braid in blood he dyed,
 And placed it on his bonnet-side:
 "By Him whose word is truth, I swear,
 No other favour will I wear,
 Till this sad token I imbrue
 In the best blood of Roderick Dhu!—
 But hark! what means yon faint halloo?
 The chase is up,—but they shall know, 690
 The stag at bay's a dangerous foe."
 Barred from the known but guarded way,

Through copse and cliffs Fitz-James must stray,
And oft must change his desperate track,
By stream and precipice turned back.
Heartless, fatigued, and faint, at length,
From lack of food and loss of strength,
He couched him in a thicket hoar,
And thought his toils and perils o'er:—
“Of all my rash adventures past, 700
This frantic feat must prove the last!
Whoe'er so mad but might have guessed
That all this Highland hornet's nest
Would muster up in swarms so soon
As e'er they heard of bands at Doune?—
Like bloodhounds now they search me out,—
Hark, to the whistle and the shout!—
If farther through the wilds I go,
I only fall upon the foe:
I'll couch me here till evening gray, 710
Then darkling try my dangerous way.”

XXIX

The shades of eve come slowly down,
The woods are wrapt in deeper brown,
The owl awakens from her dell,
The fox is heard upon the fell;
Enough remains of glimmering light
To guide the wanderer's steps aright,
Yet not enough from far to show
His figure to the watchful foe.
With cautious step and ear awake, 720
He climbs the crag and threads the brake;
And not the summer solstice there
Tempered the midnight mountain air,
But every breeze that swept the wold
Benumbed his drenched limbs with cold.
In dread, in danger, and alone,
Famished and chilled, through ways unknown,

Tangled and steep, he journeyed on;
Till, as a rock's huge point he turned,
A watch-fire close before him burned.

730

XXX

Beside its embers red and clear,
Basked in his plaid a mountaineer;
And up he sprung with sword in hand,—
“Thy name and purpose! Saxon, stand!”
“A stranger.” “What dost thou require?”
“Rest and a guide, and food and fire,
My life's beset, my path is lost,
The gale has chilled my limbs with frost.”
“Art thou a friend to Roderick?” “No.”
“Thou dar'st not call thyself a foe?”
“I dare! to him and all the band
He brings to aid his murderous hand.”
“Bold words!—but, though the beast of game
The privilege of chase may claim,
Though space and law the stag we lend,
Ere hound we slip or bow we bend,
Who ever recked, where, how, or when,
The prowling fox was trapped or slain?
Thus treacherous scouts,—yet sure they lie,
Who say thou cam'st a secret spy!”—
“They do, by heaven!—come Roderick Dhu,
And of his clan the boldest two,
And let me but till morning rest,
I write the falsehood on their crest.”
“If by the blaze I mark aright,
Thou bear'st the belt and spur of Knight.”
“Then by these tokens mayst thou know
Each proud oppressor's mortal foe.”
“Enough, enough; sit down and share
A soldier's couch, a soldier's fare.”

740

750

760

XXXI

He gave him of his Highland cheer,
The hardened flesh of mountain deer.
Dry fuel on the fire he laid,
And bade the Saxon share his plaid.
He tended him like welcome guest,
Then thus his further speech addressed:—

“Stranger, I am to Roderick Dhu
A clansman born, a kinsman true;
Each word against his honour spoke
Demands of me avenging stroke;
Yet more,—upon thy fate, ’tis said,
A mighty augury is laid.

770

It rests with me to wind my horn,—
Thou art with numbers overborne;
It rests with me, here, brand to brand,
Worn as thou art, to bid thee stand:
But, not for clan, nor kindred’s cause,
Will I depart from honour’s laws;
To assail a wearied man were shame,
And stranger is a holy name;
Guidance and rest, and food and fire,
In vain he never must require.

780

Then rest thee here till dawn of day;
Myself will guide thee on the way,
O’er stock and stone, through watch and ward,
Till past Clan-Alpine’s outmost guard,
As far as Coilantogle’s ford;
From thence thy warrant is thy sword.”

“I take thy courtesy, by heaven,
As freely as ’tis nobly given!”

790

“Well, rest thee; for the bittern’s cry
Sings us the lake’s wild lullaby.”
With that he shook the gathered heath,
And spread his plaid upon the wreath;
And the brave foemen, side by side,
Lay peaceful down like brothers tried,
And slept until the dawning beam
Purpled the mountain and the stream.

CANTO FIFTH

THE COMBAT

from 14

I

Fair as the earliest beam of eastern light,
When first, by the bewildered pilgrim spied,
It smiles upon the dreary brow of night,
And silvers o'er the torrent's foaming tide,
And lights the fearful path on mountain-side,—
Fair as that beam, although the fairest far,
Giving to horror grace, to danger pride,
Shine martial Faith, and Courtesy's bright star,
Through all the wreckful storms that cloud the brow
of War.

II

That early beam, so fair and sheen, 10
Was twinkling through the hazel screen,
When, rousing at its glimmer red,
The warriors left their lowly bed,
Looked out upon the dappled sky,
Muttered their soldier matins by,
And then awaked their fire, to steal,
As short and rude, their soldier meal.
That o'er, the Gael around him threw
His graceful plaid of varied hue,
And, true to promise, led the way, 20
By thicket green and mountain gray.
A wildering path!—they winded now
Along the precipice's brow,
Commanding the rich scenes beneath,
The windings of the Forth and Teith,
And all the vales between that lie,

Till Stirling's turrets melt in sky;
Then, sunk in copse, their farthest glance
Gained not the length of horseman's lance.
'Twas oft so steep, the foot was fain
Assistance from the hand to gain;
So tangled oft that, bursting through,
Each hawthorn shed her showers of dew,—
That diamond dew, so pure and clear,
It rivals all but Beauty's tear!

30

III

At length they came where, stern and steep,
The hill sinks down upon the deep.
Here Vennachar in silver flows,
There, ridge on ridge, Benledi rose;
Ever the hollow path twined on,
Beneath steep bank and threatening stone;
A hundred men might hold the post
With hardihood against a host.
The rugged mountain's scanty cloak
Was dwarfish shrubs of birch and oak,
With shingles bare, and cliffs between,
And patches bright of bracken green,
And heather black, that waved so high,
It held the copse in rivalry.
But where the lake slept deep and still,
Dank osiers fringed the swamp and hill;
And oft both path and hill were torn,
Where wintry torrent down had borne,
And heaped upon the cumbered land
Its wreck of gravel, rocks, and sand.
So toilsome was the road to trace,
The guide, abating of his pace,
Led slowly through the pass's jaws,
And asked Fitz-James by what strange cause
He sought these wilds, traversed by few,
Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.

40

50

60

IV

“Brave Gael, my pass, in danger tried,
Hangs in my belt and by my side;
Yet, sooth to tell,” the Saxon said,
“I dreamt not now to claim its aid.
When here, but three days since, I came,
Bewildered in pursuit of game,
All seemed as peaceful and as still
As the mist slumbering on yon hill;
Thy dangerous Chief was then afar, 70
Nor soon expected back from war.
Thus said, at least, my mountain-guide,
Though deep, perchance, the villain lied.”
“Yet why a second venture try?”
“A warrior thou, and ask me why!
Moves our free course by such fixed cause
As gives the poor mechanic laws?
Enough, I sought to drive away
The lazy hours of peaceful day;
Slight cause will then suffice to guide 80
A Knight’s free footsteps far and wide,—
A falcon flown, a greyhound strayed,
The merry glance of mountain maid;
Or, if a path be dangerous known,
The danger’s self is lure alone.”

V

“Thy secret keep, I urge thee not;—
Yet, ere again ye sought this spot,
Say, heard ye naught of Lowland war,
Against Clan-Alpine, raised by Mar?”
“No, by my word;—of bands prepared 90
To guard King James’s sports I heard;
Nor doubt I aught, but, when they hear
This muster of the mountaineer,
Their pennons will abroad be flung,

Which else in Doune had peaceful hung.”
 “Free be they flung! for we were loath
 Their silken folds should feast the moth.
 Free be they flung!—as free shall wave
 Clan-Alpine’s pine in banner brave.
 But, stranger, peaceful since you came,
 Bewildered in the mountain-game,
 Whence the bold boast by which you show
 Vich-Alpine’s vowed and mortal foe?”
 “Warrior, but yester-morn I knew
 Naught of thy Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
 Save as an outlawed desperate man,
 The chief of a rebellious clan,
 Who, in the Regent’s court and sight,
 With ruffian dagger stabbed a knight;
 Yet this alone might from his part
 Sever each true and loyal heart.”

100

110

VI

Wrathful at such arraignment foul,
 Dark lowered the clansman’s sable scowl.
 A space he paused, then sternly said,
 “And heardst thou why he drew his blade?
 Heardst thou that shameful word and blow
 Brought Roderick’s vengeance on his foe?
 What recked the Chieftain if he stood
 On Highland heath or Holy-Rood?
 He rights such wrong where it is given,
 If it were in the court of heaven.”
 “Still was it outrage;—yet, ’tis true,
 Not then claimed sovereignty his due;
 While Albany with feeble hand
 Held borrowed truncheon of command,
 The young King, mewed in Stirling tower,
 Was stranger to respect and power.

120

But then, thy Chieftain's robber life!—
Winning mean prey by causeless strife,
Wrenching from ruined Lowland swain
His herds and harvest reared in vain,—
Methinks a soul like thine should scorn
The spoils from such foul foray borne.”

130

VII

The Gael beheld him grim the while,
And answered with disdainful smile:
“Saxon, from yonder mountain high,
I marked thee send delighted eye
Far to the south and east, where lay,
Extended in succession gay,
Deep waving fields and pastures green,
With gentle slopes and groves between:—
These fertile plains, that softened vale,
Were once the birthright of the Gael;
The stranger came with iron hand,
And from our fathers reft the land.
Where dwell we now? See, rudely swell
Crag over crag, and fell o'er fell.
Ask we this savage hill we tread
For fattened steer or household bread,
Ask we for flocks these shingles dry,
And well the mountain might reply,—
‘To you, as to your sires of yore,
Belong the target and claymore!
I give you shelter in my breast,
Your own good blades must win the rest.’—
Pent in this fortress of the North,
Think'st thou we will not sally forth,
To spoil the spoiler as we may,
And from the robber rend the prey?

140

145

Ay, by my soul!—While on yon plain
The Saxon rears one shock of grain,
While of ten thousand herds there strays
But one along yon river's maze,—
The Gael, of plain and river heir,
Shall with strong hand redeem his share.
Where live the mountain Chiefs who hold
That plundering Lowland field and fold
Is aught but retribution true?
Seek other cause 'gainst Roderick Dhu."

160

VIII

Answered Fitz-James: "And, if I sought,
Think'st thou no other could be brought?
What deem ye of my path waylaid?
My life given o'er to ambuscade?"
"As of a meed to rashness due:
Hadst thou sent warning fair and true,
I seek my hound or falcon strayed,
I seek, good faith, a Highland maid,—
Free hadst thou been to come and go;
But secret path marks secret foe.
Nor yet for this, even as a spy,
Hadst thou, unheard, been doomed to die,
Save to fulfil an augury."
"Well, let it pass; nor will I now
Fresh cause of enmity avow,
To chafe thy mood and cloud thy brow.
Enough, I am by promise tied
To match me with this man of pride:
Twice have I sought Clan-Alpine's glen
In peace; but when I come again,
I come with banner, brand, and bow,
As leader seeks his mortal foe.
For love-lorn swain in lady's bower

170

180

190

Ne'er panted for the appointed hour,
As I, until before me stand
This rebel Chieftain and his band!"

IX

"Have then thy wish!"—He whistled shrill,
And he was answered from the hill;
Wild as the scream of the curlew,
From crag to crag the signal flew.
Instant, through copse and heath, arose 200
Bonnets and spears and bended bows;
On right, on left, above, below,
Sprung up at once the lurking foe;
From shingles gray their lances start,
The bracken bush sends forth the dart,
The rushes and the willow-wand
Are bristling into axe and brand,
And every tuft of broom gives life
To plaided warrior armed for strife.
That whistle garrisoned the glen 210
At once with full five hundred men,
As if the yawning hill to heaven
A subterranean host had given.
Watching their leader's beck and will,
All silent there they stood and still.
Like the loose crags whose threatening mass
Lay tottering o'er the hollow pass,
As if an infant's touch could urge
Their headlong passage down the verge,
With step and weapon forward flung, 220
Upon the mountain-side they hung.
The Mountaineer cast glance of pride
Along Benledi's living side,
Then fixed his eye and sable brow
Full on Fitz-James: "How say'st thou now?
These are Clan-Alpine's warriors true;
And, Saxon,—I am Roderick Dhu!"

X

Fitz-James was brave:—though to his heart
The life-blood thrilled with sudden start,
He manned himself with dauntless air, 230
Returned the Chief his haughty stare,
His back against a rock he bore,
And firmly placed his foot before:—
“Come one, come all! this rock shall fly
From its firm base as soon as I.”
Sir Roderick marked,—and in his eyes
Respect was mingled with surprise,
And the stern joy which warriors feel
In foemen worthy of their steel.
Short space he stood—then waved his hand: 240
Down sunk the disappearing band;
Each warrior vanished where he stood,
In broom or bracken, heath or wood;
Sunk brand and spear and bended bow,
In osiers pale and copses low;
It seemed as if their mother Earth
Had swallowed up her warlike birth.
The wind’s last breath had tossed in air
Pennon and plaid and plumage fair,—
The next but swept a lone hill-side, 250
Where heath and fern were waving wide:
The sun’s last glance was glinted back
From spear and glaive, from targe and jack,—
The next, all unreflected, shone
On bracken green and cold gray stone.

XI

Fitz-James looked round,—yet scarce believed
The witness that his sight received;
Such apparition well might seem

Delusion of a dreadful dream.

Sir Roderick in suspense he eyed,

260

And to his look the Chief replied:

“Fear naught—nay, that I need not say—

But—doubt not aught from mine array.

Thou art my guest;—I pledged my word

As far as Coilantogle ford:

Nor would I call a clansman’s brand

For aid against one valiant hand.’

Though on our strife lay every vale

Rent by the Saxon from the Gael.

So move we on;—I only meant

270

To show the reed on which you leant,

Deeming this path you might pursue

Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.”

They moved;—I said Fitz-James was brave

As ever knight that belted glaiive,

Yet dare not say that now his blood

Kept on its wont and tempered flood,

As, following Roderick’s stride, he drew

That seeming lonesome pathway through,

Which yet by fearful proof was rife

280

With lances, that, to take his life,

Waited but signal from a guide,

So late dishonoured and defied.

Ever, by stealth, his eye sought round

The vanished guardians of the ground,

And still from copse and heather deep

Fancy saw spear and broadsword peep,

And in the plover’s shrilly strain

The signal whistle heard again.

Nor breathed he free till far behind

290

The pass was left; for then they wind

Along a wide and level green,

Where neither tree nor tuft was seen,

Nor rush nor bush of broom was near,

To hide a bonnet or a spear.

XII

The Chief in silence strode before,
And reached that torrent's sounding shore,
Which, daughter of three mighty lakes,
From Vennachar in silver breaks,
Sweeps through the plain, and ceaseless mines 300
On Bochastle the mouldering lines,
Where Rome, the Empress of the world,
Of yore her eagle wings unfurled.
And here his course the Chieftain stayed,
Threw down his target and his plaid,
And to the Lowland warrior said:
"Bold Saxon! to his promise just,
Vieh-Alpine has discharged his trust.
This murderous Chief, this ruthless man,
This head of a rebellious clan, 310
Hath led thee safe, through watch and ward,
Far past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard.
Now, man to man, and steel to steel,
A Chieftain's vengeance thou shalt feel.
See, here all vantageless I stand,
Armed like thyself with single brand;
For this is Coilantogle ford,
And thou must keep thee with thy sword."

XIII

The Saxon paused: "I ne'er delayed,
When foeman bade me draw my blade; 320
Nay more, brave Chief, I vowed thy death;
Yet sure thy fair and generous faith,
And my deep debt for life preserved,
A better meed have well deserved:
Can naught but blood our feud atone!
Are there no means?"—"No, stranger, none!
And hear,—to fire thy flagging zeal,—
The Saxon cause rests on thy steel;

For thus spoke Fate by prophet bred
Between the living and the dead: 339
‘Who spills the foremost foeman’s life,
His party conquers in the strife.’ ”
“Then, by my word,” the Saxon said,
“The riddle is already read.
Seek yonder brake beneath the cliff,—
There lies Red Murdoch, stark and stiff.
Thus Fate hath solved her prophecy;
Then yield to Fate, and not to me.
To James at Stirling let us go,
When, if thou wilt be still his foe, 340
Or if the King shall not agree
To grant thee grace and favour free,
I plight mine honour, oath, and word,
That, to thy native strengths restored,
With each advantage shalt thou stand
That aids thee now to guard thy land.”

XIV

Dark lightning flashed from Roderick’s eye:
“Soars thy presumption, then, so high,
Because a wretched kern ye slew,
Homage to name to Roderick Dhu? 350
He yields not, he, to man nor Fate!
Thou add’st but fuel to my hate;—
My clansman’s blood demands revenge.
Not yet prepared?—By heaven, I change
My thought, and hold thy valour light
As that of some vain carpet knight,
Who ill deserved my courteous care,
And whose best boast is but to wear
A braid of his fair lady’s hair.”
“I thank thee, Roderick, for the word! 360
It nerves my heart, it steels my sword;
For I have sworn this braid to stain

In the best blood that warms thy vein.
Now, truce, farewell! and, ruth, begone!—
Yet think not that by thee alone,
Proud Chief! can courtesy be shown;
Though not from copse, or heath, or cairn,
Start at my whistle clansmen stern,
Of this small horn one feeble blast
Would fearful odds against thee cast. 370
But fear not—doubt not—which thou wilt—
We try this quarrel hilt to hilt.”
Then each at once his falchion drew,
Each on the ground his scabbard threw,
Each looked to sun and stream and plain
As what they ne’er might see again;
Then foot and point and eye opposed,
In dubious strife they darkly closed.

XV

Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu,
That on the field his targe he threw, 380
Whose brazen studs and tough bull-hide
Had death so often dashed aside;
For, trained abroad his arms to wield,
Fitz-James’s blade was sword and shield.
He practised every pass and ward,
To thrust, to strike, to feint, to guard;
While less expert, though stronger far,
The Gael maintained unequal war.
Three times in closing strife they stood,
And thrice the Saxon blade drank blood; 390
No stinted draught, no scanty tide,
The gushing flood the tartans dyed.
Fierce Roderick felt the fatal drain,
And showered his blows like wintry rain;
And, as firm rock or castle-roof
Against the winter shower is proof,

The foe, invulnerable still,
Foiled his wild rage by steady skill;
Till, at advantage ta'en, his brand
Forced Roderick's weapon from his hand, 400
And backward borne upon the lea,
Brought the proud Chieftain to his knee.

XVI

"Now yield thee, or by Him who made
The world, thy heart's blood dyes my blade!"
"Thy threats, thy mercy, I defy!
Let recreant yield, who fears to die."
Like adder darting from his coil,
Like wolf that dashes through the toil,
Like mountain-cat who guards her young, 410
Full at Fitz-James's throat he sprung;
Received, but recked not of a wound,
And locked his arms his foeman round.—
Now, gallant Saxon, hold thine own!
No maiden's hand is round thee thrown!
That desperate grasp thy frame might feel
Through bars of brass and triple steel!
They tug, they strain! down, down they go,
The Gael above, Fitz-James below.
The Chieftain's gripe his throat compressed,
His knee was planted on his breast; 420
His clotted locks he backward threw,
Across his brow his hand he drew,
From blood and mist to clear his sight,
Then gleamed aloft his dagger bright!
But hate and fury ill supplied
The stream of life's exhausted tide,
And all too late the advantage came,
To turn the odds of deadly game:
For, while the dagger gleamed on high,
Reeled soul and sense, reeled brain and eye. 430

Down came the blow! but in the heath
 The erring blade found bloodless sheath.
 The struggling foe may now unclasp
 The fainting Chief's relaxing grasp;
 Unwounded from the dreadful close,
 But breathless all, Fitz-James arose.

XVII

He faltered thanks to Heaven for life,
 Redeemed, unhop'd, from desperate strife;
 Next on his foe his look he cast,
 Whose every gasp appeared his last; 440
 In Roderick's gore he dipped the braid,—
 "Poor Blanche! thy wrongs are dearly paid;
 Yet with thy foe must die, or live,
 The praise that Faith and Valour give."
 With that he blew a bugle note,
 Undid the collar from his throat,
 Unbonneted, and by the wave
 Sat down his brow and hands to lave.
 Then faint afar are heard the feet
 Of rushing steeds in gallop fleet; 450
 The sounds increase, and now are seen
 Four mounted squires in Lincoln green;
 Two who bear lance, and two who lead
 By loosened rein a saddled steed;
 Each onward held his headlong course,
 And by Fitz-James reined up his horse,—
 With wonder viewed the bloody spot,—
 "Exclaim not, gallants! question not.—
 You, Herbert and Luffness, alight,
 And bind the wounds of yonder knight; 460
 Let the gray palfrey bear his weight,
 We destined for a fairer freight,
 And bring him on to Stirling straight;
 I will before at better speed,

To seek fresh horse and fitting weed.
The sun rides high;—I must be bounè
To see the archer-game at noon;
But lightly Bayard clears the lea.—
De Vaux and Herries, follow me.

XVIII

“Stand, Bayard, stand!”—the steed obeyed, 470
With arching neck and bended head,
And glancing eye and quivering ear,
As if he loved his lord to hear.
No foot Fitz-James in stirrup stayed,
No grasp upon the saddle laid,
But wreathed his left hand in the mane,
And lightly bounded from the plain,
Turned on the horse his armed heel,
And stirred his courage with the steel.
Bounded the fiery steed in air, 480
The rider sat erect and fair,
Then, like a bolt from steel crossbow
Forth launched, along the plain they go.
They dashed that rapid torrent through,
And up Carhonie’s hill they flew;
Still at the gallop pricked the Knight,
His merry men followed as they might.
Along thy banks, swift Teith! they ride,
And in the race they mock thy tide;
Torry and Lendrick now are past, 490
And Deanstown lies behind them cast;
They rise, the bannered towers of Doune,
They sink in distant woodland soon;
Blair-Drummond sees the hoofs strike fire,
They sweep like breeze through Ochertyre;
They mark just glance and disappear
The lofty brow of ancient Kier;
They bathe their coursers’ sweltering sides,

Dark Forth! amid thy sluggish tides,
And on the opposing shore take ground, 500
With plash, with scramble, and with bound.
Right-hand they leave thy cliffs, Craig-Forth!
And soon the bulwark of the North,
Gray Stirling, with her towers and town,
Upon their fleet career looked down.

XIX

As up the flinty path they strained,
Sudden his steed the leader reined;
A signal to his squire he flung,
Who instant to his stirrup sprung:—
“Seest thou, De Vaux, yon woodsman gray, 510
Who townward holds the rocky way,
Of stature tall and poor array?
Mark’st thou the firm, yet active stride,
With which he scales the mountain-side?
Know’st thou from whence he comes, or whom?”
“No, by my word;—a burly groom
He seems, who in the field or chase
A baron’s train would nobly grace—”
“Out, out, De Vaux! can fear supply,
And jealousy, no sharper eye? 520
Afar, ere to the hill he drew,
That stately form and step I knew;
Like form in Scotland is not seen,
Treads not such step on Scottish green.
’Tis James of Douglas, by Saint Serle!
The uncle of the banished Earl.
Away, away, to court, to show
The near approach of dreaded foe:
The King must stand upon his guard,
Douglas and he must meet prepared.” 530
Then right-hand wheeled their steeds, and straight
They won the Castle’s postern gate.

XX

The Douglas, who had bent his way
From Cambus-Kenneth's abbey gray,
Now, as he climbed the rocky shelf,
Held sad communion with himself:—
“Yes! all is true my fears could frame;
A prisoner lies the noble Græme,
And fiery Roderick soon will feel
The vengeance of the royal steel.
I, only I, can ward his fate,—
God grant the ransom come not late!
The Abbess hath her promise given,
My child shall be the bride of Heaven;—
Be pardoned one repining tear!
For He who gave her knows how dear,
How excellent!—but that is by,
And now my business is—to die.—
Ye towers! within whose circuit dread
A Douglas by his sovereign bled;
And thou, O sad and fatal mound!
That oft hast heard the death-axe sound,
As on the noblest of the land
Fell the stern headsman's bloody hand,—
The dungeon, block, and nameless tomb
Prepare—for Douglas seeks his doom!
But hark! what blithe and jolly peal
Makes the Franciscan steeple reel?
And see! upon the crowded street,
In motley groups what masquers meet!
Banner and pageant, pipe and drum,
And merry morrice-dancers come.
I guess, by all this quaint array,
The burghers hold their sports to-day.
James will be there; he loves such show,
Where the good yeoman bends his bow,
And the tough wrestler foils his foe,
As well as where, in proud career,

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The high-born tilter shivers spear.
 I'll follow to the Castle-park,
 And play my prize;—King James shall mark
 If age has tamed these sinews stark,
 Whose force so oft in happier days
 His boyish wonder loved to praise.”

570

XXI

The Castle gates were open flung,
 The quivering drawbridge rocked and rung,
 And echoed loud the flinty street
 Beneath the coursers' clattering feet,
 As slowly down the steep descent
 Fair Scotland's King and nobles went,
 While all along the crowded way
 Was jubilee and loud huzza.
 And ever James was bending low
 To his white jennet's saddle-bow,
 Doffing his cap to city dame,
 Who smiled and blushed for pride and shame.
 And well the simperer might be vain,—
 He chose the fairest of the train.
 Gravely he greets each city sire,
 Commends each pageant's quaint attire,
 Gives to the dancers thanks aloud,
 And smiles and nods upon the crowd,
 Who rend the heavens with their acclaims,—
 “Long live the Commons' King, King James!”
 Behind the King thronged peer and knight,
 And noble dame and damsel bright,
 Whose fiery steeds ill brooked the stay
 Of the steep street and crowded way.
 But in the train you might discern
 Dark lowering brow and visage stern;
 There nobles mourned their pride restrained,
 And the mean burghers' joys disdained;

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And chiefs, who, hostage for their clan,
Were each from home a banished man,
There thought upon their own gray tower,
Their waving woods, their feudal power,
And deemed themselves a shameful part
Of pageant which they cursed in heart.

XXII

Now, in the Castle-park, drew out
Their checkered bands the joyous rout. 610
There morricers, with bell at heel
And blade in hand, their mazes wheel;
But chief, beside the butts, there stand
Bold Robin Hood and all his band,—
Friar Tuck with quarterstaff and cowl,
Old Scathelocke with his surly scowl,
Maid Marian, fair as ivory bone,
Scarlet, and Mutch, and Little John;
Their bugles challenge all that will, 620
In archery to prove their skill.
The Douglas bent a bow of might,—
His first shaft centred in the white,
And when in turn he shot again,
His second split the first in twain.
From the King's hand must Douglas take
A silver dart, the archers' stake;
Fondly he watched, with watery eye,
Some answering glance of sympathy,—
No kind emotion made reply!
Indifferent as to archer wight, 630
The Monarch gave the arrow bright.

XXIII

Now, clear the ring! for, hand to hand,
The manly wrestlers take their stand.
Two o'er the rest superior rose,
And proud demanded mightier foes,—

Nor called in vain; for Douglas came.—
For life is Hugh of Larbert lame;
Scarce better John of Alloa's fare,
Whom senseless home his comrades bare.
Prize of the wrestling match, the King 640
To Douglas gave a golden ring,
While coldly glanced his eye of blue,
As frozen drop of wintry dew.
Douglas would speak, but in his breast
His struggling soul his words suppressed;
Indignant then he turned him where
Their arms the brawny yeomen bare,
To hurl the massive bar in air.
When each his utmost strength had shown, .
The Douglas rent an earth-fast stone 650
From its deep bed, then heaved it high,
And sent the fragment through the sky
A rood beyond the farthest mark;
And still in Stirling's royal park,
The gray-haired sires, who know the past,
To strangers point the Douglas cast,
And moralize on the decay
Of Scottish strength in modern day.

XXIV

The vale with loud applause rang,
The Ladies' Rock sent back the clang. 660
The King, with look unmoved, bestowed
A purse well filled with pieces broad.
Indignant smiled the Douglas proud,
And threw the gold among the crowd,
Who now with anxious wonder scan,
And sharper glance, the dark gray man;
Till whispers rose among the throng,
That heart so free, and hand so strong,
Must to the Douglas blood belong.

The old men marked and shook their head,
To see his hair with silver spread,
And winked aside, and told each son
Of feats upon the English done,
Ere Douglas of the stalwart hand
Was exiled from his native land.
The women praised his stately form,
Though wrecked by many a winter's storm;
The youth with awe and wonder saw
His strength surpassing Nature's law.
Thus judged, as is their wont, the crowd,
Till murmurs rose to clamours loud.
But not a glance from that proud ring
Of peers who circled round the King
With Douglas held communion kind,
Or called the banished man to mind;
No, not from those who at the chase
Once held his side the honoured place,
Begirt his board, and in the field
Found safety underneath his shield;
For he whom royal eyes disown,
When was his form to courtiers known!

XXV

The Monarch saw the gambols flag,
And bade let loose a gallant stag,
Whose pride, the holiday to crown,
Two favourite greyhounds should pull down,
That venison free and Bourdeaux wine
Might serve the archery to dine.
But Lufra,—whom from Douglas' side
Nor bribe nor threat could e'er divide,
The fleetest hound in all the North,—
Brave Lufra saw, and darted forth.
She left the royal hounds midway,
And dashing on the antlered prey,

Sunk her sharp muzzle in his flank,
And deep the flowing life-blood drank.
The King's stout huntsman saw the sport
By strange intruder broken short,
Came up, and with his leash unbound,
In anger struck the noble hound.
The Douglas had endured, that morn, 710
The King's cold look, the nobles' scorn,
And last, and worst to spirit proud,
Had borne the pity of the crowd;
But Lufra had been fondly bred,
To share his board, to watch his bed,
And oft would Ellen Lufra's neck
In maiden glee with garlands deck;
They were such playmates that with name
Of Lufra Ellen's image came.
His stifled wrath is brimming high, 720
In darkened brow and flashing eye;
As waves before the bark divide,
The crowd gave way before his stride;
Needs but a buffet and no more,
The groom lies senseless in his gore.
Such blow no other hand could deal,
Though gauntleted in glove of steel.

XXVI

Then clamoured loud the royal train,
And brandished swords and staves amain;
But stern the Baron's warning: "Back! 730
Back, on your lives, ye menial pack!
Beware the Douglas.—Yes! behold,
King James! The Douglas, doomed of old,
And vainly sought for near and far,
A victim to atone the war,
A willing victim, now attends,
Nor craves thy grace but for his friends.—"

“Thus is my clemency repaid?
Presumptuous Lord!” the Monarch said:
“Of thy mis-proud ambitious clan, 740
Thou, James of Bothwell, wert the man,
The only man, in whom a foe
My woman-mercy would not know;
But shall a Monarch’s presence brook
Injurious blow and haughty look?—
What ho! the Captain of our Guard!
Give the offender fitting ward.—
Break off the sports!”—for tumult rose,
And yeomen ’gan to bend their bows,—
“Break off the sports!” he said and frowned, 750
“And bid our horsemen clear the ground.”

XXVII

Then uproar wild and misarray
Marred the fair form of festal day.
The horsemen pricked among the crowd,
Repelled by threats and insult loud;
To earth are borne the old and weak,
The timorous fly, the women shriek;
With flint, with shaft, with staff, with bar,
The hardier urge tumultuous war.
At once round Douglas darkly sweep 760
The royal spears in circle deep,
And slowly scale the pathway steep,
While on the rear in thunder pour
The rabble with disordered roar.
With grief the noble Douglas saw
The Commons rise against the law.
And to the leading soldier said:
“Sir John of Hyndford, ’twas my blade
That knighthood on thy shoulder laid;
For that good deed permit me then 770
A word with these misguided men.—

XXVIII

“Hear, gentle friends, ere yet for me
Ye break the bands of fealty.
My life, my honour, and my cause,
I tender free to Scotland’s laws.
Are these so weak as must require
The aid of your misguided ire?
Or if I suffer causeless wrong,
Is then my selfish rage so strong,
My sense of public weal so low, 780
That, for mean vengeance on a foe,
Those cords of love I should unbind
Which knit my country and my kind?
O no! Believe, in yonder tower
It will not soothe my captive hour,
To know those spears our foes should dread
For me in kindred gore are red:
To know, in fruitless brawl begun,
For me that mother wails her son, 790
For me that widow’s mate expires,
For me that orphans weep their sires,
That patriots mourn insulted laws,
And curse the Douglas for the cause.
O let your patience ward such ill,
And keep your right to love me still!”

XXIX

The crowd’s wild fury sunk again
In tears, as tempests melt in rain.
With lifted hands and eyes, they prayed
For blessings on his generous head
Who for his country felt alone, 800
And prized her blood beyond his own.
Old men upon the verge of life
Blessed him who stayed the civil strife;
And mothers held their babes on high,
The self-devoted Chief to spy,

Triumphant over wrongs and ire,
To whom the prattlers owed a sire.
Even the rough soldier's heart was moved;
As if behind some bier beloved,
With trailing arms and drooping head, 810
The Douglas up the hill he led,
And at the Castle's battled verge,
With sighs resigned his honoured charge.

XXX

The offended Monarch rode apart,
With bitter thought and swelling heart,
And would not now vouchsafe again
Through Stirling streets to lead his train.
"Oh Lennox, who would wish to rule
This changeling crowd, this common fool?
Hear'st thou," he said, "the loud acclaim 820
With which they shout the Douglas name?
With like acclaim the vulgar throat
Strained for King James their morning note;
With like acclaim they hailed the day
When first I broke the Douglas' sway;
And like acclaim would Douglas greet
If he could hurl me from my seat.
Who o'er the herd would wish to reign,
Fantastic, fickle, fierce, and vain?
Vain as the leaf upon the stream, 830
And fickle as a changeful dream;
Fantastic as a woman's mood,
And fierce as Frenzy's fevered blood.
Thou many-headed monster-thing,
O who would wish to be thy king?—

XXXI

"But soft! what messenger of speed
Spurs hitherward his panting steed?
I guess his cognizance afar—

What from our cousin, John of Mar?"
"He prays, my liege, your sports keep bound 840
Within the safe and guarded ground;
For some foul purpose yet unknown,—
Most sure for evil to the throne,—
The outlawed Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
Has summoned his rebellious crew;
'Tis said, in James of Bothwell's aid
These loose banditti stand arrayed.
The Earl of Mar this morn from Doune
To break their muster marched, and soon 860
Your Grace will hear of battle fought;
But earnestly the Earl besought,
Till for such danger he provide,
With scanty train you will not ride."

XXXII

"Thou warn'st me I have done amiss,—
I should have earlier looked to this;
I lost it in this bustling day.—
Retrace with speed thy former way;
Spare not for spoiling of thy steed,
The best of mine shall be thy meed. 860
Say to our faithful Lord of Mar,
We do forbid the intended war;
Roderick this morn in single fight
Was made our prisoner by a knight,
And Douglas hath himself and cause
Submitted to our kingdom's laws.
The tidings of their leaders lost
Will soon dissolve the mountain host,
Nor would we that the vulgar feel,
For their Chief's crimes, avenging steel,
Bear Mar our message, Braeco, fly!" 870
He turned his steed,—“My liege, I hie,

Yet ere I cross this lily lawn
I fear the broadswords will be drawn.”
The turf the flying courser spurned,
And to his towers the King returned.

XXXIII

Ill with King James's mood that day
Suited gay feast and minstrel lay;
Soon were dismissed the courtly throng,
And soon cut short the festal song. 880
Nor less upon the saddened town
The evening sunk in sorrow down.
The burghers spoke of civil jar,
Or rumoured feuds and mountain war,
Of Moray, Mar, and Roderick Dhu,
All up in arms;—the Douglas too,
They mourned him pent within the hold,
“Where stout Earl William was of old.”—
And there his word the speaker stayed,
And finger on his lip he laid, 890
Or pointed to his dagger blade.
But jaded horsemen from the west
At evening to the Castle pressed,
And busy talkers said they bore
Tidings of fight on Katrine's shore;
At noon the deadly fray begun,
And lasted till the set of sun.
Thus giddy rumour shook the town,
Till closed the Night her pennons brown.

CANTO SIXTH

THE GUARD-ROOM

I

The sun, awakening, through the smoky air
Of the dark city casts a sullen glance,
Rousing each caitiff to his task of care,
Of sinful man the sad inheritance;
Summoning revellers from the lagging dance,
Scaring the prowling robber to his den;
Gilding on battled tower the warder's lance,
And warning student pale to leave his pen,
And yield his drowsy eyes to the kind nurse of men.

What various scenes, and O, what scenes of woe,
Are witnessed by that red and struggling beam! 10
The fevered patient, from his pallet low,
Through crowded hospital beholds it stream;
The ruined maiden trembles at its gleam,
The debtor wakes to thought of gyve and jail,
The love-lorn wretch starts from tormenting dream;
The wakeful mother, by the glimmering pale,
Trims her sick infant's couch, and soothes his feeble wail:

II

At dawn the towers of Stirling rang
With soldier-step and weapon-clang, 20
While drums with rolling note foretell
Relief to weary sentinel.
Through narrow loop and casement barred,

The sunbeams sought the Court of Guard,
And, struggling with the smoky air,
Deadened the torches' yellow glare.
In comfortless alliance shone
The lights through arch of blackened stone,
And showed wild shapes in garb of war,
Faces deformed with beard and scar, 30
All haggard from the midnight watch,
And fevered with the stern debauch;
For the oak table's massive board
Flooded with wine, with fragments stored,
And beakers drained, and cups o'erthrown,
Showed in what sport the night had flown.
Some, weary, snored on floor and bench;
Some laboured still their thirst to quench;
Some, chilled with watching, spread their hands
O'er the huge chimney's dying brands, 40
While round them, or beside them flung,
At every step their harness rung.

III

These drew not for their fields the sword,
Like tenants of a feudal lord,
Nor owned the patriarchal claim
Of Chieftain in their leader's name;
Adventurers they, from far who roved,
To live by battle which they loved.
There the Italian's clouded face,
The swarthy Spaniard's there you trace; 50
The mountain-loving Switzer there
More freely breathed in mountain-air;
The Fleming there despised the soil
That paid so ill the labourer's toil;
Their rolls showed French and German name;
And merry England's exiles came,

To share, with ill-concealed disdain,
Of Scotland's pay the scanty gain.
All brave in arms, well trained to wield
The heavy halberd, brand, and shield;
In camps licentious, wild, and bold;
In pillage fierce and uncontrolled;
And now, by holytide and feast,
From rules of discipline released.

60

IV

They held debate of bloody fray,
Fought 'twixt Loch Katrine and Achray.
Fierce was their speech, and mid their words
Their hands oft grappled to their swords;
Nor sunk their tone to spare the ear
Of wounded comrades groaning near,
Whose mangled limbs and bodies gored
Bore token of the mountain sword,
Though, neighbouring to the Court of Guard,
Their prayers and feverish wails were heard,—
Sad burden to the ruffian joke,
And savage oath by fury spoke!—
At length up started John of Brent,
A yeoman from the banks of Trent;
A stranger to respect or fear,
In peace a chaser of the deer,
In host a hardy mutineer,
But still the boldest of the crew
When deed of danger was to do.
He grieved that day their games cut short,
And marred the dicer's brawling sport.
And shouted loud, "Renew the bowl!
And, while a merry catch I troll,
Let each the buxom chorus bear,
Like brethren of the brand and spear."—

70

80

V

SOLDIER'S SONG

Our vicar still preaches that Peter and Poule 80
Laid a swinging long curse on the bonny brown bowl,
That there's wrath and despair in the jolly black-jack,
And the seven deadly sins in a flagon of sack;
Yet whoop, Barnaby! off with thy liquor,
Drink upsees out, and a fig for the vicar!

Our vicar he calls it damnation to sip
The ripe ruddy dew of a woman's dear lip,
Says that Beelzebub lurks in her kerchief so sly,
And Apollyon shoots darts from her merry black eye;
Yet whoop, Jack! kiss Gillian the quicker, 100
Till she bloom like a rose, and a fig for the vicar!

Our vicar thus preaches,—and why should he not?
For the dues of his cure are the placket and pot;
And 'tis right of his office poor laymen to lurch
Who infringe the domains of our good Mother Church.
Yet whoop, bully-boys! off with your liquor,
Sweet Marjorie's the word, and a fig for the vicar!

VI

The warder's challenge, heard without,
Stayed in mid-roar the merry shout.
A soldier to the portal went,— 110
“Here is old Bertram, sirs, of Ghent;
And—beat for jubilee the drum!—
A maid and minstrel with him come.”
Bertram, a Fleming, gray and scarred,
Was entering now the Court of Guard,
A harper with him, and, in plaid
All muffled close, a mountain maid,
Who backward shrunk to 'scape the view

Of the loose scene and boisterous crew.
“What news?” they roared:—“I only know, 120
From noon till eve we fought with foe,
As wild and as untameable
As the rude mountains where they dwell;
On both sides store of blood is lost,
Nor much success can either boast.”—
“But whence thy captives, friend? such spoil
As theirs must needs reward thy toil.
Old dost thou wax, and wars grow sharp;
Thou now hast glee-maiden and harp!
Get thee an ape, and trudge the land, 130
The leader of a juggler band.”

VII

“No, comrade;—no such fortune mine.
After the fight these sought our line,
That aged harper and the girl,
And, having audience of the Earl,
Mar bade I should purvey them steed,
And bring them hitherward with speed.
Forbear your mirth and rude alarm,
For none shall do them shame or harm.—”
“Hear ye his boast?” cried John of Brent, 140
Ever to strife and jangling bent;
“Shall he strike doe beside our lodge,
And yet the jealous niggard grudge
To pay the forester his fee?
I’ll have my share howe’er it be,
Despite of Moray, Mar, or thee.”
Bertram his forward step withstood;
And, burning in his vengeful mood,
Old Allan, though unfit for strife,
Laid hand upon his dagger-knife; 150
But Ellen boldly stepped between,
And dropped at once the tartan screen:—

So, from his morning cloud, appears
The sun of May through summer tears.
The savage soldiery, amazed,
As on descended angel gazed;
Even hardy Brent, abashed and tamed,
Stood half admiring, half ashamed.

VIII

Boldly she spoke: "Soldiers, attend!
My father was the soldier's friend, 160
Cheered him in camps, in marches led,
And with him in the battle bled.
Not from the valiant or the strong
Should exile's daughter suffer wrong."
Answered De Brent, most forward still
In every feat or good or ill:
"I shame me of the part I played;
And thou an outlaw's child, poor maid!
An outlaw I by forest laws,
And merry Needwood knows the cause. 170
Poor Rose,—if Rose be living now,"—
He wiped his iron eye and brow,—
"Must bear such age, I think, as thou.—
Hear ye, my mates! I go to call
The Captain of our watch to hall:
There lies my halberd on the floor;
And he that steps my halberd o'er,
To do the maid injurious part,
My shaft shall quiver in his heart!
Beware loose speech, or jesting rough; 180
Ye all know John de Brent. Enough."

IX

Their Captain came, a gallant young,—
Of Tullitardine's house he sprung,—
Nor wore he yet the spurs of knight;

Gay was his mien, his humour light,
And, though by courtesy controlled,
Forward his speech, his bearing bold.
The high-born maiden ill could brook
The scanning of his curious look
And dauntless eye:—and yet, in sooth, 190
Young Lewis was a generous youth;
But Ellen's lovely face and mien,
Ill suited to the garb and scene,
Might lightly bear construction strange,
And give loose fancy scope to range.
“Welcome to Stirling towers, fair maid!
Come ye to seek a champion's aid,
On palfrey white, with harper hoar,
Like errant damosel of yore?
Does thy high quest a knight require, 200
Or may the venture suit a squire?”
Her dark eye flashed;—she paused and sighed:—
“O what have I to do with pride!—
Through scenes of sorrow, shame, and strife,
A suppliant for a father's life,
I crave an audience of the King.
Behold, to back my suit, a ring,
The royal pledge of grateful claims,
Given by the Monarch to Fitz-James.”

X

The signet-ring young Lewis took
With deep respect and altered look,
And said; “This ring our duties own;
And pardon, if to worth unknown,
In semblance mean obscurely veiled,
Lady, in aught my folly failed.
Soon as the day flings wide his gates,
The King shall know what suitor waits.
Please you meanwhile in fitting bower 210

Repose you till his waking hour;
Female attendance shall obey 220
Your hest, for service or array.
Permit I marshal you the way.”
But, ere she followed, with the grace
And open bounty of her race,
She bade her slender purse be shared
Among the soldiers of the guard.
The rest with thanks their guerdon took,
But Brent, with shy and awkward look,
On the reluctant maiden’s hold
Forced bluntly back the proffered gold:— 230
“Forgive a haughty English heart,
And O, forget its ruder part!
The vacant purse shall be my share,
Which in my barret-cap I’ll bear,
Perchance, in jeopardy of war,
Where gayer crests may keep afar.”
With thanks—’twas all she could—the maid
His rugged courtesy repaid.

XI

When Ellen forth with Lewis went,
Allan made suit to John of Brent:— 240
“My lady safe, O let your grace
Give me to see my master’s face!
His minstrel I,—to share his doom
Bound from the cradle to the tomb.
Tenth in descent, since first my sires
Waked for his noble house their lyres,
Nor one of all the race was known
But prized its weal above their own.
With the Chief’s birth begins our care;
Our harp must soothe the infant heir, 250
Teach the youth tales of fight, and grace
His earliest feat of field or chase;

In peace, in war, our rank we keep,
 We cheer his board, we soothe his sleep,
 Nor leave him till we pour our verse—
 A doleful tribute!—o'er his hearse.
 Then let me share his captive lot;
 It is my right,—deny it not!"

"Little we reckon," said John of Brent,
 "We Southern men, of long descent;
 Nor wot we how a name—a word—
 Makes clansmen vassals to a lord:
 Yet kind my noble landlord's part,—
 God bless the house of Beaudesert!
 And, but I loved to drive the deer
 More than to guide the labouring steer,
 I had not dwelt an outcast here.
 Come, good old Minstrel, follow me;
 Thy Lord and Chieftain shalt thou see."

260

XII

Then, from a rusted iron hook,
 A bunch of ponderous keys he took,
 Lighted a torch, and Allan led
 Through grated arch and passage dread.
 Portals they passed, where, deep within,
 Spoke prisoner's moan and fetters' din;
 Through rugged vaults, where, loosely stored,
 Lay wheel, and axe, and headsman's sword,
 And many a hideous engine grim,
 For wrenching joint and crushing limb,
 By artists formed who deemed it shame
 And sin to give their work a name.
 They halted at a low-browed porch,
 And Brent to Allan gave the torch,
 While bolt and chain he backward rolled,
 And made the bar unhasp its hold.
 They entered:—'twas a prison-room

270

280

Of stern security and gloom,
Yet not a dungeon; for the day
Through lofty gratings found its way,
And rude and antique garniture
Decked the sad walls and oaken floor,
Such as the rugged days of old
Deemed fit for captive noble's hold.
"Here," said De Brent, "thou mayst remain
Till the Leech visit him again.
Strict is his charge, the warders tell,
To tend the noble prisoner well."
Retiring then the bolt he drew,
And the lock's murmurs growled anew.
Roused at the sound, from lowly bed
A captive feebly raised his head;
The wondering Minstrel looked, and knew—
Not his dear lord, but Roderick Dhu!
For, come from where Clan-Alpine fought,
They, erring, deemed the Chief he sought.

290

300

XIII

As the tall ship, whose lofty prore
Shall never stem the billows more,
Deserted by her gallant band,
Amid the breakers lies astrand,—
So on his couch lay Roderick Dhu!
And oft his fevered limbs he threw
In toss abrupt, as when her sides
Lie rocking in the advancing tides,
That shake her frame with ceaseless beat,
Yet cannot heave her from her seat;—
O, how unlike her course at sea!
Or his free step on hill and lea!—
Soon as the Minstrel he could scan,—
"What of thy lady?—of my clan?—
My mother?—Douglas?—tell me all!

310

320

Have they been ruined in my fall?
Ah, yes! or wherefore art thou here?
Yet speak,—speak boldly,—do not fear.”—
For Allan, who his mood well knew,
Was choked with grief and terror too.—
“Who fought?—who fled?—Old man, be brief;—
Some might,—for they had lost their Chief.
Who basely live?—who bravely died?”
“O, calm thee, Chief!” the Minstrel cried,
“Ellen is safe!” “For that thank Heaven!” 330
“And hopes are for the Douglas given;—
The Lady Margaret, too, is well;
And, for thy clan,—on field or fell,
Has never harp of minstrel told
Of combat fought so true and bold.
Thy stately Pine is yet unbent,
Though many a goodly bough is rent.”

XIV

The Chieftain reared his form on high,
And fever’s fire was in his eye;
But ghastly, pale, and livid streaks 340
Checkered his swarthy brow and cheeks.
“Hark, Minstrel! I have heard thee play,
With measure bold on festal day,
In yon lone isle,—again where ne’er
Shall harper play or warrior hear!—
That stirring air that peals on high,
O’er Dermid’s race our victory.—
Strike it!—and then,—for well thou canst,—
Free from thy minstrel-spirit glanced,
Fling me the picture of the fight, 350
When met my clan the Saxon might.
I’ll listen, till my fancy hears
The clang of swords, the crash of spears!
These grates, these walls, shall vanish then

For the fair field of fighting men,
And my free spirit burst away,
As if it soared from battle fray.”
The trembling Bard with awe obeyed,—
Slow on the harp his hand he laid;
But soon remembrance of the sight
He witnessed from the mountain’s height,
With what old Bertram told at night,
Awakened the full power of song,
And bore him in career along;—
As shallop launched on river’s tide,
That slow and fearful leaves the side,
But, when it feels the middle stream,
Drives downward swift as lightning’s beam.

380

XV

BATTLE OF BEAL’ AN DUINE

“The Minstrel came once more to view
The eastern ridge of Benvenue,
For ere he parted he would say
Farewell to lovely Loch Achray—
Where shall he find, in foreign land
So lone a lake, so sweet a strand!—
There is no breeze upon the fern,
No ripple on the lake,
Upon her eyry nods the erne,
The deer has sought the brake;
The small birds will not sing aloud,
The springing trout lies still,
So darkly glooms yon thunder-cloud,
That swathes, as with a purple shroud,
Benledi’s distant hill.
Is it the thunder’s solemn sound
That mutters deep and dread,
Or echoes from the groaning ground

370

380

The warrior's measured tread?
 Is it the lightning's quivering glance
 That on the thicket streams,
 Or do they flash on spear and lance
 The sun's retiring beams?—
 I see the dagger-crest of Mar,
 I see the Moray's silver star,
 Wave o'er the cloud of Saxon war,
 That up the lake comes winding far!
 To hero boune for battle-strife,
 Or bard of martial lay,
 'Twere worth ten years of peaceful life,
 One glance at their array!

390

XVI

"Their light-armed archers far and near
 Surveyed the tangled ground,
 Their centre ranks, with pike and spear,
 A twilight forest frowned,
 Their barded horsemen in the rear
 The stern battalia crowned.
 No cymbal clashed, no clarion rang,
 Still were the pipe and drum;
 Save heavy tread, and armour's clang,
 The sullen march was dumb.
 There breathed no wind their crests to shake,
 Or wave their flags abroad;
 Scarce the frail aspen seemed to quake,
 That shadowed o'er their road.
 Their vaward scouts no tidings bring,
 Can rouse no lurking foe,
 Nor spy a trace of living thing,
 Save when they stirred the roe;
 The host moves like a deep-sea wave,
 Where rise no rocks its pride to brave,
 High-swelling, dark, and slow.

400

410

420

The lake is passed, and now they gain
A narrow and a broken plain,
Before the Trosachs' rugged jaws;
And here the horse and spearmen pause,
While, to explore the dangerous glen,
Dive through the pass the archer-men.

XVII

"At once there rose so wild a yell
Within that dark and narrow dell,
As all the fiends from heaven that fell
Had pealed the banner-cry of hell!" 430
Forth from the pass in tumult driven,
Like chaff before the wind of heaven,
The archery appear:
For life! for life! their flight they ply—
And shriek, and shout, and battle-cry,
And plaids and bonnets waving high,
And broadswords flashing to the sky,
Are maddening in the rear.
Onward they drive in dreadful race,
Pursuers and pursued; 440
Before that tide of flight and chase,
How shall it keep its rooted place,
The spearmen's twilight wood?—
'Down, down,' cried Mar, 'your lances down!
Bear back both friend and foe!—
Like reeds before the tempest's frown,
That serried grove of lances brown
At once lay levelled low;
And closely shouldering side to side,
The bristling ranks the onset bide.— 450
'We'll quell the savage mountaineer,
As their Tinchel cows the game!
They come as fleet as forest deer,
We'll drive them back as tame.'

XVIII

“Bearing before them in their course
The relics of the archer force,
Like wave with crest of sparkling foam,
Right onward did Clan-Alpine come.

Above the tide, each broadsword bright
Was brandishing like beam of light,

460

Each targe was dark below;
And with the ocean’s mighty swing,
When heaving to the tempest’s wing,
They hurled them on the foe.

I heard the lance’s shivering crash,
As when the whirlwind rends the ash;
I heard the broadsword’s deadly clang,
As if a hundred anvils rang!

But Moray wheeled his rearward rank
Of horsemen on Clan-Alpine’s flank,—

470

‘My banner-man, advance!

I see,’ he cried, ‘their column shake.

Now, gallants! for your ladies’ sake,

Upon them with the lance!’—

The horsemen dashed among the rout,

As deer break through the broom;

Their steeds are stout, their swords are out,

They soon make lightsome room.

Clan-Alpine’s best are backward borne—

Where, where was Roderick then!

480

One blast upon his bugle-horn

Were worth a thousand men.

And reflux through the pass of fear

The battle’s tide was poured;

Vanished the Saxon’s struggling spear,

Vanished the mountain-sword.

As Bracklinn’s chasm, so black and steep,

Receives her roaring linn,

As the dark caverns of the deep

Suck the wild whirlpool in,

490

So did the deep and darksome pass
Devour the battle's mingled mass;
None linger now upon the plain,
Save those who ne'er shall fight again.

XIX

"Now westward rolls the battle's din,
That deep and doubling pass within.—
Minstrel, away! the work of fate
Is bearing on; its issue wait,
Where the rude Trosachs' dread defile
Opens on Katrine's lake and isle.
Gray Benvenue I soon repassed,
Loch Katrine lay beneath me cast.

500

The sun is set;—the clouds are met,
The lowering scowl of heaven
An inky hue of livid blue

To the deep lake has given;
Strange gusts of wind from mountain glen
Swept o'er the lake, then sunk again.
I heeded not the eddying surge,
Mine eye but saw the Trosachs' gorge,
Mine ear but heard that sullen sound,
Which like an earthquake shook the ground,
And spoke the stern and desperate strife
That parts not but with parting life,
Seeming, to minstrel ear, to toll
The dirge of many a passing soul.

510

Nearer it comes—the dim-wood glen
The martial flood disgorged again,
But not in mingled tide;

The plaided warriors of the North
High on the mountain thunder forth
And overhang its side,

520

While by the lake below appears
The darkening cloud of Saxon spears,

At weary bay each shattered band,
Eyeing their foemen, sternly stand;
Their banners stream like tattered sail,
That flings its fragments to the gale,
And broken arms and disarray
Marked the fell havoc of the day.

530

XX

“Viewing the mountain’s ridge askance,
The Saxons stood in sullen trance,
Till Moray pointed with his lance,
And cried: ‘Behold yon isle!—
See! none are left to guard its strand
But women weak, that wring the hand:
’Tis there of yore the robber band
Their booty wont to pile;—
My purse, with bonnet-pieces store,
To him will swim a bow-shot o’er,
And loose a shallop from the shore.
Lightly we’ll tame the war-wolf then,
Lords of his mate, and brood, and den.’
Forth from the ranks a spearman sprung,
On earth his casque and corselet rung,
He plunged him in the wave:—
All saw the deed,—the purpose knew,
And to their clamours Benvenue
A mingled echo gave;
The Saxons shout, their mate to cheer,
The helpless females scream for fear,
And yells for rage the mountaineer.
’Twas then, as by the outcry riven,
Poured down at once the lowering heaven:
A whirlwind swept Loch Katrine’s breast,
Her billows reared their snowy crest.
Well for the swimmer swelled they high,
To mar the Highland marksman’s eye;

540

550

For round him showered, mid rain and hail,
The vengeful arrows of the Gael. 560
In vain.—He nears the isle—and lo!
His hand is on a shallop's bow.
Just then a flash of lightning came,
It tinged the waves and strand with flame;
I marked Duncraggan's widowed dame,
Behind an oak I saw her stand,
A naked dirk gleamed in her hand:—
It darkened,—but amid the moan
Of waves I heard a dying groan;—
Another flash!—the spearman floats 570
A weltering corse beside the boats,
And the stern matron o'er him stood,
Her hand and dagger streaming blood.

XXI

“‘Revenge! revenge!’ the Saxons cried,
The Gaels’ exulting shout replied.
Despite the elemental rage,
Again they hurried to engage;
But, ere they closed in desperate fight,
Bloody with spurring came a knight, 580
Sprung from his horse, and from a crag
Waved ’twixt the hosts a milk-white flag.
Clarion and trumpet by his side
Rung forth a truce-note high and wide,
While, in the Monarch’s name, afar
A herald’s voice forbade the war,
For Bothwell’s lord and Roderick bold
Were both, he said, in captive hold.”—
But here the lay made sudden stand,
The harp escaped the Minstrel’s hand!
Oft had he stolen a glance, to spy 590
How Roderick brooked his minstrelsy:
At first, the Chieftain, to the chime,
With lifted hand kept feeble time;

That motion ceased,—yet feeling strong
 Varied his look as changed the song;
 At length, no more his deafened ear
 The minstrel melody can hear;
 His face grows sharp,—his hands are clenched,
 As if some pang his heart-strings wrenched;
 Set are his teeth, his fading eye 600
 Is sternly fixed on vacancy;
 Thus, motionless and moanless, drew
 His parting breath stout Roderick Dhu!—
 Old Allan-bane looked on aghast,
 While grim and still his spirit passed;
 But when he saw that life was fled,
 He poured his wailing o'er the dead.

XXII

LAMENT

“And art thou cold and lowly laid,
 Thy foeman's dread, thy people's aid,
 Breadalbane's boast, Clan-Alpine's shade! 610
 For thee shall none a requiem say?—
 For thee, who loved the minstrel's lay,
 For thee, of Bothwell's house the stay,
 The shelter of her exiled line,
 E'en in this prison-house of thine,
 I'll wail for Alpine's honoured Pine!

“What groans shall yonder valleys fill!
 What shrieks of grief shall rend yon hill!
 What tears of burning rage shall thrill,
 When mourns thy tribe thy battles done, 620
 Thy fall before the race was won,
 Thy sword ungirt ere set of sun!
 There breathes not clansman of thy line,
 But would have given his life for thine.
 O, woe for Alpine's honoured Pine!

“Sad was thy lot on mortal stage!—
The captive thrush may brook the cage,
The prisoned eagle dies for rage.
Brave spirit, do not scorn my strain!
And, when its notes awake again,
Even she, so long beloved in vain,
Shall with my harp her voice combine,
And mix her woe and tears with mine,
To wail Clan-Alpine’s honoured Pine.”

639

XXIII

Ellen the while, with bursting heart,
Remained in lordly bower apart,
Where played, with many-coloured gleams,
Through storied pane the rising beams.
In vain on gilded roof they fall,
And lightened up a tapestried wall,
And for her use a menial train
A rich collation spread in vain.
The banquet proud, the chamber gay,
Scarce drew one curious glance astray;
Or if she looked, ’twas but to say,
With better omen dawned the day
In that lone isle, where waved on high
The dun-deer’s hide for canopy;
Where oft her noble father shared
The simple meal her care prepared,
While Lufra, crouching by her side,
Her station claimed with jealous pride,
And Douglas, bent on woodland game,
Spoke of the chase to Malcolm Græme,
Whose answer, oft at random made,
The wandering of his thoughts betrayed.
Those who such simple joys have known
Are taught to prize them when they’re gone.
But sudden, see, she lifts her head,

640

650

The window seeks with cautious tread.
What distant music has the power
To win her in this woeful hour?
'Twas from a turret that o'erhung
Her latticed bower, the strain was sung.

660

XXIV

LAY OF THE IMPRISONED HUNTSMAN

"My hawk is tired of perch and hood,
My idle greyhound loathes his food,
My horse is weary of his stall,
And I am sick of captive thrall.
I wish I were as I have been,
Hunting the hart in forest green,
With bended bow and bloodhound free,
For that's the life is meet for me.

670

"I hate to learn the ebb of time
From yon dull steeple's drowsy chime,
Or mark it as the sunbeams crawl,
Inch after inch, along the wall.
The lark was wont my matins ring,
The sable rook my vespers sing;
These towers, although a king's they be,
Have not a hall of joy for me.

680

"No more at dawning morn I rise,
And sun myself in Ellen's eyes,
Drive the fleet deer the forest through,
And homeward wend with evening dew;
A blithesome welcome blithely meet,
And lay my trophies at her feet,
While fled the eve on wing of glee,—
That life is lost to love and me!"

XXV

The heart-sick lay was hardly said,
The listener had not turned her head, 690
It trickled still, the starting tear,
When light a footstep struck her ear,
And Snowdoun's graceful Knight was near.
She turned the hastier, lest again
The prisoner should renew his strain.
"O welcome, brave Fitz-James!" she said;
"How may an almost orphan maid
Pay the deep debt—" "O say not so!
To me no gratitude you owe.
Not mine, alas! the boon to give, 700
And bid thy noble father live;
I can but be thy guide, sweet maid,
With Scotland's King thy suit to aid.
No tyrant he, though ire and pride
May lay his better mood aside.
Come, Ellen, come! 'tis more than time,
He holds his court at morning prime."
With beating heart, and bosom wrung,
As to a brother's arm she clung.
Gently he dried the falling tear, 710
And gently whispered hope and cheer;
Her faltering steps half led, half stayed,
Through gallery fair and high arcade,
Till at his touch its wings of pride
A portal arch unfolded wide.

XXVI

Within 'twas brilliant all and light,
A thronging scene of figures bright;
It glowed on Ellen's dazzled sight,
As when the setting sun has given
Ten thousand hues to summer even, 720
And from their tissue fancy frames

Aerial knights and fairy dames.
Still by Fitz-James her footing stayed;
A few faint steps she forward made,
Then slow her drooping head she raised,
And fearful round the presence gazed;
For him she sought who owned this state,
The dreaded Prince whose will was fate!—
She gazed on many a princely port
Might well have ruled a royal court;
On many a splendid garb she gazed,—
Then turned bewildered and amazed,
For all stood bare; and in the room
Fitz-James alone wore cap and plume.
To him each lady's look was lent,
On him each courtier's eye was bent;
Midst furs and silks and jewels sheen,
He stood, in simple Lincoln green,
The centre of the glittering ring,—
And Snowdown's Knight is Scotland's King!

730

740

XXVII

As wreath of snow on mountain-breast
Slides from the rock that gave it rest,
Poor Ellen glided from her stay,
And at the Monarch's feet she lay;
No word her choking voice commands,—
She showed the ring,—she clasped her hands.
O, not a moment could he brook,
The generous Prince, that suppliant look!
Gently he raised her,—and, the while,
Checked with a glance the circle's smile;
Graceful, but grave, her brow he kissed,
And bade her terrors be dismissed:—
“Yes, fair; the wandering poor Fitz-James
The fealty of Scotland claims.
To him thy woes, thy wishes, bring;

750

He will redeem his signet ring.
Ask naught for Douglas;—yester even,
His Prince and he have much forgiven;
Wrong hath he had from slanderous tongue,
I, from his rebel kinsmen, wrong. 760
We would not, to the vulgar crowd,
Yield what they craved with clamour loud;
Calmly we heard and judged his cause,
Our council aided and our laws.
I stanch'd thy father's death-feud stern
With stout De Vaux and gray Glencairn;
And Bothwell's Lord henceforth we own
The friend and bulwark of our Throne.—
But, lovely infidel, how now?
What clouds thy misbelieving brow? 770
Lord James of Douglas, lend thine aid;
Thou must confirm this doubting maid."

XXVIII

Then forth the noble Douglas sprung,
And on his neck his daughter hung.
The Monarch drank, that happy hour,
The sweetest, holiest draught of Power,—
When it can say with godlike voice,
Arise, sad Virtue, and rejoice!
Yet would not James the general eye
On nature's raptures long should pry; 780
He stepped between—"Nay, Douglas, nay,
Steal not my proselyte away!
The riddle 'tis my right to read,
That brought this happy chance to speed.
Yes, Ellen, when disguised I stray
In life's more low but happier way,
'Tis under name which veils my power,
Nor falsely veils,—for Stirling's tower
Of yore the name of Snowdown claims,

And Normans call me James Fitz-James. 790
Thus watch I o'er insulted laws,
Thus learn to right the injured cause."
Then, in a tone apart and low,—
"Ah, little traitress! none must know
What idle dream, what lighter thought,
What vanity full dearly bought,
Joined to thine eye's dark witchcraft, drew
My spell-bound steps to Benvenue
In dangerous hour, and all but gave
Thy Monarch's life to mountain glaive!" 800
Aloud he spoke: "Thou still dost hold
That little talisman of gold,
Pledge of my faith, Fitz-James's ring,—
What seeks fair Ellen of the King?"

XXIX

Full well the conscious maiden guessed
He probed the weakness of her breast;
But with that consciousness there came
A lightening of her fears for Græme,
And more she deemed the Monarch's ire 810
Kindled 'gainst him who for her sire
Rebellious broadsword boldly drew;
And, to her generous feeling true,
She craved the grace of Roderick Dhu.
"Forbear thy suit;—the King of kings
Alone can stay life's parting wings.
I know his heart, I know his hand,
Have shared his cheer, and proved his brand;—
My fairest earldom would I give
To bid Clan-Alpine's Chieftain live!—
Hast thou no other boon to crave? 820
No other captive friend to save?"
Blushing, she turned her from the King,
And to the Douglas gave the ring,

As if she wished her sire to speak
The suit that stained her glowing cheek.
“Nay, then, my pledge has lost its force,
And stubborn justice holds her course.
Malcolm, come forth!”—and, at the word,
Down kneeled the Græme to Scotland’s Lord.
“For thee, rash youth, no suppliant sues, 830
From thee may Vengeance claim her dues,
Who, nurtured underneath our smile,
Hast paid our care by treacherous wile,
And sought amid thy faithful clan
A refuge for an outlawed man,
Dishonouring thus thy loyal name.—
Fetters and warder for the Græme!”
His chain of gold the King unstrung,
The links o’er Malcolm’s neck he flung,
Then gently drew the glittering band, 840
And laid the clasp on Ellen’s hand.

HARP of the North, farewell! The hills grow dark,
On purple peaks a deeper shade descending;
In twilight copse the glow-worm lights her spark,
The deer, half seen, are to the covert wending.
Resume thy wizard elm! the fountain lending,
And the wild breeze, thy wilder minstrelsy;
Thy numbers sweet with nature’s vespers blending,
With distant echo from the fold and lea,
And herd-boy’s evening pipe, and hum of housing bee.

Yet, once again, farewell, thou Minstrel Harp! 851
Yet, once again, forgive my feeble sway,
And little reck I of the censure sharp
May idly cavil at an idle lay.

Much have I owed thy strains on life's long way,
Through secret woes the world has never known,
When on the weary night dawned wearier day,
And bitterer was the grief devoured alone.—
That I o'erlive such woes, Enchantress! is thine own.

Hark! as my lingering footsteps slow retire, 860
Some Spirit of the Air has waked thy string!
'Tis now a seraph bold, with touch of fire,
'Tis now the brush of Fairy's frolic wing.
Receding now, the dying numbers ring
Fainter and fainter down the rugged dell;
And now the mountain breezes scarcely bring
A wandering witch-note of the distant spell—
And now, 'tis silent all!—Enchantress, fare thee well!

NOTES

The scene of *The Lady of the Lake* is laid in Perthshire, all the places mentioned in the text being in the immediate vicinity of Loch Katrine. For the location of these places the student is referred to the map opposite the title page.

CANTO FIRST

1. **Harp of the North.** In the opening stanzas written in Spenserian verse, the poet expresses the wish that he may have the inspiration of the Scottish minstrels of olden days.

2. **Witch-elm.** Literally "the drooping elm." In reality the word has nothing to do with "witch," but there is a possible suggestion of enchantment in the use of the term.

2. **St. Fillan's Spring.** There are two Celtic saints named St. Fillan, both of whom are associated with Perthshire. A pool near the church of St. Fillan at the eastern end of Loch Earn was supposed to have miraculous powers of healing. At any rate its association with the district of the Clan Macgregor, who play a chief part in the poem, is clear.

3. **numbers.** Music.

4. **envious.** Envying the musical powers of the harp.

10. **Caledon.** Caledonia. Scotland was so-called by the Romans.

14. **according pause.** A pause in the singing filled with the music of the harp.

17. **burden.** The prevailing thought or sentiment.

20. **magic maze.** The confusing sounds of the harp, from which harmony can be evolved only by a skilful hand.

26. **wizard.** Enchanted.

31. **Glenartney.** A glen in Perthshire that takes its name from the River Artney.

33. **Benvoirlich.** A mountain north of the Artney. "Ben" is the Scottish word for mountain—Mount Voirlich.

38. **warder.** Watchman.

45. **beamed frontlet.** The forehead of the stag with its branching horns.

47. **tainted gale.** Tainted with the scent of his pursuers.

48. **cry.** The yelping of the hounds.

54. **opening pack.** Bursting into cry—a hunting epithet.

66. **cairn.** A heap of stones. Here it means a rocky crag.
68. **ken.** Sight, or vision.
71. **linn.** A waterfall. The word also means a steep cliff.
74. **sylvan war.** The chase.
84. **shrewdly.** Severely, keenly.
93. **Lochard.** A lake about five miles from Loch Katrine. Aberfoyle is about a mile from Lochard.
95. **wept.** Drooped.
112. **Brigg of Turk.** The Bridge of the Wild Boar, commemorating the killing there of the last wild boar in Scotland. The bridge is over Glenfinlas Water, between Vennachar and Achray.
115. **scourge and steel.** Whip and spur.
117. **Embossed.** Covered with patches of foam shewing his utter exhaustion—a hunting term.
120. **St. Hubert's breed.** Hounds kept by the abbots of St. Hubert. The saint was considered the patron of huntsmen.
127. **quarry.** The word generally applies to the flesh of the animal when dead, but its use as here is not uncommon.
130. **stock.** Stumps, or roots of trees.
138. **whinyard.** A hunting-knife.
145. **Trosachs.** A rough, wooded district near Lochs Katrine and Vennachar. The word means literally "rough, bristled country."
150. **amain.** With all their force.
151. **chiding.** In the sense of making the rocks echo.
166. **Woe worth.** Evil be to. "Woe be to the chase."
174. **dingle.** A small ravine or valley.
197. **Shinar's plain.** These lines refer to the Tower of Babel built on the Plain of Shinar. *Genesis* xi, 1-9.
201. **minaret.** The turret of a Turkish mosque.
202. **pagod.** Pagoda.
208. **sheen.** Bright, glistening.
212. **Boon.** Bounteous, or bountiful.
214. **eglantine.** The sweet-briar rose.
217. **clift.** Crevice.
219. **Emblems.** The foxglove is a very gorgeous flower, while the nightshade is poisonous. Probably the thought is that "pride goeth before a fall."
256. **nice.** Careful.
274. **wildering.** Bewildering, growing in wild confusion.
281. **churchman.** A high dignitary of the Church.
285. **cloister.** A monastery.

293. **matins.** The morning service of the Roman Catholic Church. The "hum" refers to the murmur subdued by the distance.

297. **drop a bead.** Say a prayer. As each prayer is said, a bead on the rosary is passed through the fingers.

302. **beshrew.** Curse, but with a touch of sympathy.

318. **falchion.** A short, curved sword.

342. **Naiad.** A nymph of the stream, or water-nymph. The nymphs in classical mythology are represented as beautiful girls, laughing and happy. Each nymph presided over the stream in which she had taken up her abode.

344. **Nymph.** A general term covering the guardian spirits of the streams, trees, fountains, etc.

344. **Grace.** One of the attendants of Venus, the goddess of Love.

359. **mountain tongue.** The Gaelic.

363. **snood.** A ribbon worn about the hair by unmarried girls.

384. **indignant spirit.** Prompt to respond to "a tale of injury."

400. **shallop.** A small, light boat; a skiff.

408. **wont.** Accustomed.

410. **signet sage.** Sign of age, or of wisdom that comes with age.

423. **baron's crest.** The sign of nobility worn on the helmet.

425. **Slighting.** Treating lightly.

440. **ptarmigan.** A kind of grouse.

441. **mere.** Lake.

443. **by the rood.** By the cross.

452. **fay.** A fairy.

458. **Allan-bane.** The minstrel in the service of Ellen's father. "Bane" means white-haired.

460. **visioned future.** Allan is gifted with the faculty of "second sight," of seeing into the future.

464. **Lincoln green.** Cloth usually worn by hunters and foresters, and woven originally in Lincoln.

467. **trim.** Neat.

470. **degree.** Rank.

475. **errant-knight.** A knight wandering in search of adventures.

476. **sooth.** True.

477. **Doomed.** Destined.

478. **emprise.** Enterprise.

491. **mirror of the lake.** The mirror-like surface of the lake darkens as evening comes on.

525. **Idæan vine.** The red whortleberry.

528. **could bear.** The relative pronoun "that" is understood before the words.

532. **thy lady.** Each knight was in duty bound to choose some lady to whom his devoted services were due. It is not enough to serve womankind generally; his devotion must centre in some lady in particular.

546. **target.** Shield.

548. **store.** Stored.

559. **garnish.** Adorn.

568. **took the word.** Spoke in her turn; answered.

573. **Ferragus or Ascabart.** Ferragus appears in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*. He was forty feet high and had the strength of twenty men. Orlando slew him in single combat. Ascabart is found in the old romance of *Bevis of Hampton*. He was but thirty feet high and was exiled by his fellow giants on account of his small stature.

574. **hold.** Stronghold.

576. **mistress of the mansion.** Lady Margaret, the mother of Roderick.

580. **more than kindred.** The Lady Margaret was Ellen's aunt.

591. **Snowdoun.** The old name of Stirling.

596. **God wot.** God knows.

616. **Weird women.** Witches.

621. **charmed rhymes.** Rhymes made with charms, which cast a spell over those who hear.

623. **symphony between.** The music of the harp as the song paused.

638. **pibroch.** Here the bagpipes themselves, but usually the music of the pipes.

642. **blittern.** A marsh bird with a booming, drumlike note, which may be heard at a long distance.

650. **prolong.** Ellen held the last notes of the song she had been singing, until she could improvise words in honour of the stranger.

657. **reveillé.** The bugle call that rouses soldiers in the morning.

684. **soul.** Confidences.

729. **that exiled race.** The Douglas family.

738. **orisons.** Prayers.

740. **told.** Counted. See line 297 above.

CANTO SECOND

1. **jetty.** Black as jet.
3. **matin.** Morning.
17. **good speed the while.** In the meanwhile God prosper you.
23. **honoured meed.** May you win the prize as reward at the tournament, while beautiful women watch the conflict between the knights.
29. **plaided stranger.** A Highlander.
35. **hap.** Mischance, or what happened.
37. **main.** Sea. Life is here likened to the changeable ocean.
44. **kindred worth.** Worth similar or akin to your own.
66. **lichens.** Mosses.
80. **the fair.** The fair one.
101. **Southern.** The Lowlanders and the English were so-called by the Highlanders.
109. **the Græme.** The family of the Græmes, or 'Grahams, was prominent in the neighbourhood of Stirling and also in Scottish history.
112. **hall and bower.** The men usually assembled in the hall, the women in the bower. Among men and women.
122. **mightier hand.** The hand of fate.
131. **erst.** Formerly.
131. **St. Modan.** A Scottish abbot of Melrose in the seventh century.
141. **Bothwell.** A castle in Lanarkshire, near Glasgow, on the banks of the Clyde, one of the seats of the Douglas family.
142. **to ruin driven.** The Douglasses had been exiled because of the anger of James V, whom they had held for a time as a prisoner.
159. **From Tweed to Spey.** From one end of Scotland to the other. The Tweed formed the southern boundary of Scotland, while the Spey is a river in the far north.
164. **boding.** Foreboding.
168. **not . . more resigned.** Did not give up more.
170. **reave.** Tear away.
183. **chaplet.** A crown or garland of flowers.
198. **leading star.** Lode or polar star.
200. **Bleeding Heart.** The cognizance of the Douglas family, commemorating the heroism of Sir James Douglas, who, while on his way to the Holy Land with the heart of Bruce, was killed in battle against the Moors in Spain. When he found the odds against him in the battle, he threw the casket containing the heart into the midst of the enemy, declaring his intention of

following it to the death. Douglas was killed, but the casket was recovered and taken back to Scotland. The heart was buried in Melrose Abbey.

206. **strathspey.** A Highland dance.

213. **The Saxon scourge.** The scourge of the Lowlands.

213. **Clan-Alpine.** A number of clans are included in this designation—the Macgregors, Mackinnons, Grants, Macnabs—all claiming descent from Kenneth McAlpine, the founder of the Scottish monarchy. The Macgregors were the chief clan, with their badge a pine tree and their motto, “Thy race is royal.”

214. **Loch Lomond.** A lovely lake, the largest in Great Britain, twenty-five miles long, and seven miles at its widest.

216. **Lennox foray.** A raid into the southland. Lennox was the general name given to the district to the south of Loch Lomond.

221. **Holy-Rood.** The palace of the Kings of Scotland in Edinburgh.

235. **Guerdon.** Reward.

236. **dispensation.** A special dispensation would have to be obtained from the Pope for the marriage of Roderick and Ellen, as they were first cousins.

260. **votaress.** A nun, one vowed to the service of the Church.

260. **Maronnan’s cell.** At the eastern end of Loch Lomond was a chapel dedicated to Maronnan, a now forgotten saint.

270. **Bracklinn.** A beautiful waterfall on the Keltie, a mountain stream.

274. **claymore.** A broad, two-edged sword.

306. **Tine-man.** Archibald, the third Earl of Douglas, tined, or lost, so many followers in his numerous battles that he was nicknamed the Tineman.

306. **fairy lore.** Many of the famous swords of antiquity were supposed to have been forged by supernatural powers, for instance, King Arthur’s sword *Excalibur*.

308. **Hotspur.** Harry Percy, son of the Earl of Northumberland, had defeated and captured the Earl of Douglas at Homildon Hill in 1402, but released him on condition that he should assist the Percys in the rebellion against Henry IV of England. In the next year, at the Battle of Shrewsbury, Hotspur was killed and Douglas captured.

319. **Beltane game.** Sports held on May-day.

327. **canna’s hoary beard.** The down on the cotton-grass.

340. **bannered Pine.** A pine-tree was the emblem on Roderick’s flag.

343. **brave.** Gay, bright-coloured.

350. **streamers.** Ribbons attached to the bagpipes.
351. **chanters.** The pipe of the bagpipes on which the melody is played.
362. **gathering.** Strictly the mustering of the clan, but also used of the music that calls the men to the mustering place.
387. **vocal strain.** When the bagpipes ceased, the rowers began to sing.
392. **the burden bore.** Took up and sang the refrain in chorus.
396. **Vich Alpine.** Son or descendant of Alpine.
405. **bourgeon.** Bud.
408. **Dhu.** Black.
420. **slogan.** The battle cry of the Highlanders.
431. **the rosebud.** Ellen Douglas.
468. **dross.** Impurities.
486. **pride.** The pomp and show that accompanied Roderick.
497. **Percy's Norman pennon.** In a skirmish before the walls of Newcastle, the Earl of Douglas captured the banner of the Percys. The battle of Otterburn was fought in the attempt to recover the trophy.
504. **crescent.** One of the emblems of the Percy family, the Earls of Northumberland, who were wardens of the Border.
506. **Blantyre.** A village near Bothwell Castle, the seat of an ancient priory.
507. **flung back.** Echoed.
523. **The falcon.** The falcon, used in hunting, was kept hooded until the prey was seen.
527. **fabled goddess.** Diana or Artemis, the huntress goddess of the Romans and Greeks.
541. **ptarmigan.** The plumage of the ptarmigan changes to white in winter.
549. **sob.** Gasping for breath.
563. **quail to.** Yield to.
567. **and why.** Ellen is surprised, knowing the enmity between Roderick and Græme, that her father had brought the latter with him.
577. **a royal ward.** Malcolm being under age was, according to feudal law, a ward of the King.
582. **Despite old spleen.** In spite of his former anger.
606. **glozing words.** Fine phrases that sound well, but do not convey the truth.
615. **The King's vindictive pride.** Scott says: "In 1529, James V made a convention at Edinburgh, for the purpose of considering the best mode of quelling the Border robbers, who,

during the licence of his minority, and the troubles which followed, had committed many exorbitances. Accordingly he assembled a flying army of ten thousand men, consisting of his principal nobility and their followers, who were directed to bring their hawks and dogs with them, that the monarch might refresh himself with sport during the intervals of military execution. With this array he swept through Ettrick Forest, where he hanged, over the gate of his own castle, Piers Cockburn of Henderland, who had prepared, according to tradition, a feast for his reception. He caused Adam Scott of Tushielaw also to be executed, who was distinguished by the title of King of the Border. But the most noted victim of justice, during the expedition, was John Armstrong of Gilnockie, famous in Scottish song, who, confiding in his own supposed innocence, met the King, with a retinue of thirty-six persons, all of whom were hanged at Carlenrig, near the source of the Teviot. The effect of this severity was such, that, as the vulgar expressed it, 'the rush-bush kept the cow,' and 'therefore was great peace and rest a long time, wherethrough the king had great profit; for he had ten thousand sheep going in the Ettrick Forest in keeping by Andrew Bell, who made the King as good count of them as they had gone in the bounds of Fife.' "

623. **Meggat's mead.** The names mentioned in this and the following lines are famous on the border between Scotland and England.

630. **ruthless.** Pitiless.

638. **streight.** Difficulty.

678. **The Links of Forth.** The windings of the River Forth.

679. **Stirling's porch.** The gateway to the King's Castle at Stirling.

683. **Blench not.** Do not turn pale.

694. **beetled.** Projected.

699. **startler.** One who is startled.

710. **crossing.** Conflicting.

718. **hectic strife.** The internal conflict which caused her alternately to flush and to grow pale.

745. **of the night.** A demon, or evil spirit, abroad during the night time.

757. **checkered shroud.** The plaid that covered his breast.

773. **minion.** An expression of contempt.

804. **fell.** Rock.

805. **Nor lackey, etc.** Roderick will serve no man, not even the King.

807. **More would he, etc.** Roderick in effect accuses Malcolm of being a spy. He had shortly before taunted him with effeminacy.

809. **henchman.** A servant, usually a confidential attendant, or secretary.

810. **safe-conduct.** Pass.

831. **The Fiery Cross.** The Fiery Cross is fully described in Canto Third.

839. **dirk.** Dagger.

855. **dare.** To try to force Ellen into marriage.

856. **to air.** Say what he wishes to say.

867. **cormorant.** A sea bird, which sometimes visits inland waters. It is a very rapid swimmer.

870. **weal.** Welfare, safety.

CANTO THIRD

3. **store.** Many.

4. **ventures happed.** Adventures that had taken place.

15. **wound.** Blown.

18. **Fiery Cross.** Scott says: "When a chieftain designed to summon his clan . . . he slew a goat and, making a cross of any light wood, seared its extremities in the fire and extinguished them in the blood of the animal. This was called the Fiery Cross. It was delivered to a swift and trusty messenger, who ran full speed with it to the next hamlet, where he presented it to the principal person, with a single word implying the place of rendezvous. He who received the symbol was bound to send it forward, with equal despatch, to the next village; and thus it passed with incredible celerity through all the district which owed allegiance to the chief."

18. **glanced.** Flashed.

30. **chalice.** Cup-like flower.

31. **lawn.** An open, grassy spot in the forest.

39. **cushat dove.** The ring-dove, or wood pigeon.

62. **rowan.** The mountain-ash.

70. **frantic penance.** Punishment self-inflicted in a religious frenzy.

76. **Druid.** The Druids were the priests of the ancient Britons.

81. **hallowed creed.** The Christian religion.

87. **strath.** A broad valley.

102. **bucklered.** Protected by a shield.

104. **fieldfare.** A kind of thrush.

106. **mocked at time.** "Their race was swifter than the flight of time."—*Sykes*.

121. **compeers.** Equals in age.

136. **sable-lettered page.** Old English letters, sometimes called black-letter type.

140. **cabala.** Mysterious, impossible to understand.

152. **River Demon.** The River Horse, an evil and malicious spirit, who delights in calamities.

159. **seer.** One who sees into the future.

160. **disembodied world.** A world of spirits.

166. **Ben-Shie.** Scott says: "Many great families in the Highlands were supposed to have a tutelar, or rather a domestic spirit attached to them, who took an interest in their prosperity, and intimated by its wailings any approaching disaster. The Ben-Shie implies a female fairy, whose lamentations were once supposed to precede the death of a chieftain of particular families. When she is visible it is in the form of an old woman, with a blue mantle and streaming hair."

175. **ban.** Curse.

185. **grisly.** Gruesome.

186. **crosslet.** A little cross.

187. **cubit.** Eighteen inches.

189. **Inch-Cailliach.** The Island of Nuns at the lower end of Loch Lomond. It is one of the burial places of the Macgregor Clan.

196. **anathema.** Curse.

201. **dwelling low.** The burial place of the dead of Clan-Alpine.

210. **strook.** Struck.

218. **covert.** Hiding-place.

224. **scathed.** Burned.

241. **goshawk.** A kind of hawk.

251. **Coir-Uriskin.** Scott says: "This is a very steep and most romantic hollow in the mountains of Benvenue, overhanging the southeastern extremity of Loch Katrine. It is surrounded with stupendous rocks, overshadowed with birch trees, mingled with oaks, the spontaneous production of the mountain, even where its cliffs are denuded of soil."

253. **Beala-nam-bo.** A pass on the side of Benvenue opposite to the Goblin's Cave. It literally means the "Pass of the Cattle," from the fact that the cattle taken in the raids on the Lowlands were usually driven through this pass.

284. **Lanrick mead.** A meadow near Loch Vennachar.

305. **false morass.** Having the appearance of solid ground, but bog beneath.

307. **questing.** Hunting.

308. **scaur.** Precipice

330. **changed cheer.** His face changed by emotion.
342. **bosky.** Wooded.
367. **coronach.** The lament for the dead in the Highlands.
377. **hoary.** Ripe.
381. **searest.** Driest.
382. **in flushing.** In full bloom—a metaphor signifying that Duncan was in the prime of life.
384. **correl.** Scott says: “The hollow side of the hill, where game usually lies.”
385. **cumber.** Trouble.
392. **Stumah.** The word means “faithful.”
429. **unwonted.** Unaccustomed.
432. **oak . . . sapling.** Duncan was the oak; his son is the sapling, just beginning his growth.
458. **sable strath.** Dark valley.
459. **chapel of St. Bride.** The chapel of St. Bride, or St. Bridget, a favourite Irish and Scottish saint, is now in ruins.
463. **sympathetic eye.** Reeling in sympathy with the turbulent waters.
476. **rout.** Crowd, company.
480. **Gothic arch.** Gothic architecture is distinguished by the “pointed” arch.
483. **coif.** A close-fitting cap worn by married women and widows.
486. **unwitting.** Not knowing.
493. **kerchief.** The head covering.
498. **churchyard gate.** The first messenger, Malise, carries the Fiery Cross to Duncraggan, bursting unceremoniously into a group of mourners. Angus leaves his father’s bier, carries the Cross to St. Bride’s chapel, and hands it to Norman, who has just left the church with his bride. He, too, obeys the summons and hurries forward.
539. **brae.** Hillside.
544. **bracken.** Fern.
575. **coil.** Tumult.
576. **sullen.** Dreary.
593. **rendezvous.** The meeting-place agreed upon.
614. **cruel.** Ellen was left behind as a pledge; cruel in respect to Roderick’s suit, as she had refused to marry him.
631. **incumbent.** As if about to fall.
654. **satyrs.** Greek gods, partly human, partly bestial. They were generally represented as half man and half goat.

655. **mystic maze.** Mysterious dance.
 656. **blast.** Strike blind.
 705. **strain.** The rustling of the trees.
 711. **Ave Maria.** Hail Mary! See *Luke* i, 28.
 727. **Stainless styled.** Called by us stainless, or pure.
 755. **various.** Varied.
 759. **curious.** Even by one who examined closely.
 761. **the tartan screen.** "The tartan of the Clan Macgregor is a chequer made by three sets of dark green bands crossing upon a red ground with a glimpse of white on the line of the square."—*Sykes*.
 767. **eagle plume.** The distinguishing mark of the chief.

CANTO FOURTH

2. **dawns from.** Springs from.
 4. **embalmed.** Washed.
 5. **wilding.** Growing wild.
 10. **fond conceit.** Trifling thought, or idea.
 22. **hied.** Sped, or hastened.
 36. **boune.** Prepared.
 42. **inured . . . bout.** Hardened to endure such bitter strife.
 54. **dear pledge.** The women, children, and elderly men placed there for safe-keeping,
 60. **augury.** A method of foretelling the future.
 63. **Taghairm.** Scott says: "The Highlanders, like all rude people, had various superstitious modes of inquiring into futurity. One of the most noted was the Taghairm, mentioned in the text. A person was wrapped up in the skin of a newly-slain bullock, and deposited beside a waterfall, or at the bottom of a precipice, or in some other strange, wild, or unusual situation, where the scenery around him suggested nothing but objects of horror. In this situation he revolved in his mind the question proposed; and whatever was impressed upon him by his exalted imagination, passed for the inspiration of those disembodied spirits, who haunt the desolate recesses."
 73. **kerns.** Soldiers.
 78. **scathless.** Without harm to itself.
 82. **boss.** The face of the cliff. The "boss" is the knob or projection in the centre of the shield.
 98. **broke.** Quartered, or cut up.
 112. **shroud of sentient clay.** The body, capable of feeling.
 123. **avouch.** Acknowledge.
 130. **blazed in scroll.** Written in bright colours on parchment.

140. **A spy.** Fitz-James.

150. **glaive.** Sword.

152. **Moray's silver star.** The crest of the Morays is the coronet of an earl surmounted by a silver star of twelve rays.

153. **sable pale.** A dark (sable) broad perpendicular stripe (pale) through the middle of the shield. The terms are heraldic.

160. **friendly clans of Earn.** Stewarts and Maclarens, in particular, who lived in the neighbourhood of Loch Earn.

174. **stance.** Station.

186. **fast by.** Close by, or near to.

198. **streamers of the north.** The Northern Lights.

223. **trowed.** Trusted, or believed.

231. **Cambus-Kenneth.** A celebrated abbey near Stirling, founded in 1147. It is now in ruins.

231. **fane.** Temple, but here it means "abbey."

246. **beguile.** Deceive.

250. **Sooth.** True.

262. **mavis and merle.** Thrush and blackbird.

267. **wold.** Open country.

277. **vest of pall.** Vestment, or garment of rich cloth.

283. **darkling.** In the dark.

285. **vair.** Fur of the squirrel.

287. **russet.** Homely.

297. **Elfin King.** The King of the Fairies, or Elves.

298. **woned.** Lived.

302. **circle.** The fairies were fabled to dance in circles at the midnight hour.

306. **fatal green.** Green was the colour worn by the fairies, who resented the wearing of this colour by mortals.

308. **christened man.** A Christian. The fairies were supposed to regard very highly those who had had the privilege of Christian baptism.

330. **kindly.** Kindred

357. **Wist I.** If I knew.

358. **sign.** Mark his brow with the sign of the cross.

359. **mould.** Shape.

367. **mould.** Land.

387. **bourne.** Limit, or boundary.

392. **augur scathe.** Prophecy harm.

419. **fatal bait.** That Ellen was flattered by his attentions.
429. **price of blood.** Reward for his death.
437. **train.** Trick, or snare.
473. **reck of.** Care for, or have any desire for.
506. **weeds.** Dress.
523. **better time.** In better days.
544. **hollow way.** The path through the valley.
555. **Maudlin.** A corruption of Magdalene.
559. **pitched a bar.** Put a stone in the sports, or perhaps "threw the hammer."
567. **batten.** Fatten.
585. **the song went on.** Blanche was trying to warn Fitz-James against his enemies.
590. **toils . . . stakes.** The nets (for catching game) are ready and attached to the stakes. Everything is prepared to make certain of your falling a victim.
593. **hunters.** The followers of Roderick.
594. **stag of ten.** Having ten tines, or prongs, to his antlers.
598. **a wounded doe.** Blanche.
624. **kindred ambush.** Where his kindred lie ready in ambush.
628. **Saxon.** Lowlander, a Sassenach, so-called by the Highlanders.
642. **Draggled.** Wet with the blood.
651. **born.** Born, or fated, to be my avenger.
657. **shred.** Cut off.
665. **honoured sign.** Either the cross, or the belt and spurs, probably the latter.
672. **wreak.** Avenge.
686. **favour.** A token worn in the helmet, generally the gift of a lady.
687. **Imbrue.** Dip, or soak.
722. **summer solstice.** June 21st. Here it means the warmth of summer.
744. **privilege of chase.** The stag was usually allowed a short start before the hounds were loosed.
746. **slip.** Let loose.
761. **cheer.** Food, fare.
787. **Coilantogle.** The ford through the River Teith.
788. **warrant.** Best security.
794. **The wreath.** The bed of heather.

CANTO FIFTH

1. **Fair as the earliest beam.** "It is a very pretty harmony at the opening of this Canto to unite the sunrise with the brighter and nobler elements of the story, the martial faith and courtesy, the higher humanity, of the two combatants, and thus fix the reader's eyes on this as the centre of the picture."

2. **bewildered.** Lost.

5. **fearful.** Dangerous.

10. **sheen.** Bright, or perhaps, shining.

15. **matins.** Morning prayers.

22. **wildering.** Bewildering.

30. **fain.** Glad.

46. **shingles.** Pebbles.

51. **Dank osiers.** Damp, or moist willows.

64. **sooth to tell.** To tell you the truth.

108. **Regent.** The Duke of Albany, who ruled during the minority of James V.

125. **truncheon.** A staff, emblematic of office.

126. **mewed.** Imprisoned.

161. **shock.** Sheaf.

163. **maze.** Winding course.

253. **jack.** A leather coat.

271. **the reed.** How weak your support.

277. **wont and tempered.** Accustomed and regular.

298. **three mighty lakes.** Katrine, Vennachar, and Achray.

301. **mouldering lines.** A line of forts had been built in this neighbourhood centuries before by the Romans, whose standard was the eagle.

325. **atone.** Settle, or appease.

356. **carpet knight.** A knight better fitted to attend on ladies than to fight.

361. **steels my sword.** Strengthens my arm.

364. **ruth.** Pity.

378. **dubious.** Doubtful.

380. **targe.** Scott says: "A round target of light wood, covered with strong leather, and studded with brass or iron, was a necessary part of a Highlander's equipment."

383. **abroad.** In France.

385. **ward.** Guard by means of the weapons.

426. **life's exhausted tide.** The loss of blood.

461. **palfrey.** A light saddle horse, especially for women.

462. **fairer freight.** Ellen Douglas.

463. **straight.** Immediately.

478. **armed heel.** The spur.

486. **pricked.** Hurried, spurred on.

503. **bulwark.** That guarded the North Country against the Highlanders.

505. **fleet career.** Sir Walter Scott actually rode from Loch Vennachar to Stirling to see if it were possible for Fitz-James to cover the distance in the time given him in the poem.

525. **Saint Serle.** There is really no such saint in the Calendar. A rhyme was necessary.

526. **banished Earl.** The Douglas of the poem is supposed to be the uncle of the banished Earl of Angus.

532. **postern gate.** A private entrance at the rear.

544. **the bride of Heaven.** Shall become a nun.

550. **by his sovereign bled.** A reference to William, eighth Earl of Douglas, who was stabbed by James II in Stirling Castle.

551. **fatal mound.** The mound of Stirling, where noble prisoners were executed.

558. **Franciscan steeple.** The Greyfriars Church, a chapel of the Franciscan order of monks, built by James IV in 1594.

561. **pageant.** A painted show.

562. **morrice-dancers.** Dancers dressed in fantastic costumes. The chief character went astride a hobby-horse, and jangled the scores of bells attached to himself in tune to the music.

564. **burghers.** Citizens.

571. **play my prize.** Take my part in the contest.

572. **stark.** Strong, vigorous.

584. **jennet.** A Spanish horse.

594. **the Commons King.** James V was popular because of the interest he took in the common people and because of his desire to rule justly.

597. **brookd.** Endured.

606. **feudal power.** Power over their own dependents.

610. **checkered bands.** Dressed in costumes of many colours.

614. **Robin Hood.** Scott says: "The exhibition of this renowned outlaw and his band was a favourite frolic at such festivals as we are describing. The game of Robin Hood was usually acted in May; and he was associated with the morrice-dancers." Robin Hood was the famous outlaw of Sherwood Forest, so well portrayed by Scott himself in *Ivanhoe*.

615. **Friar Tuck.** The priest of Robin Hood's band.

615. **quarterstaff.** A staff about six and a half feet long, held by one hand in the middle, and by the other between middle and end. It was a formidable weapon.

616. **Scathlocke.** One of Robin Hood's band.

617. **Maid Marian.** Robin Hood's wife.

618. **Scarlet.** Will Scarlet, a famous member of the outlaw band.

618. **Mutch.** Another member of the band.

618. **Little John.** So-called on account of his giant size. He was Robin Hood's Lieutenant.

622. **the white.** The bull's eye.

630. **archer wight.** A common archer.

654. **royal park.** The King's Park at Stirling is now used for ordinary sporting events.

659. **The vale.** A hollow below the castle.

660. **Ladies' Rock.** Ladies' Hill, southwest of the "vale."

662. **pieces broad.** Twenty-shilling pieces of gold, thinner and broader than the later coins of similar value.

696. **Bourdeaux wine.** French wine from Bourdeaux.

708. **leash.** The leather thong by which the hounds were held.

735. **the war.** With Roderick and Clan-Alpine.

747. **fitting ward.** Guard him as befits his rank.

775. **tender.** Offer.

810. **trailing arms.** Lances and spears held near the middle, with the butt near the ground.

812. **battled verge.** The gateway of the castle surmounted by battlements.

819. **changeling.** Constantly changing their minds.

822. **vulgar throat.** The throats of the common people.

838. **cognizance.** Badge by which he might be recognized.

859. **meed.** Reward.

868. **vulgar.** The common people.

872. **lily.** Covered with flowers.

890. **dagger blade.** He was doubtful about the fate of the Douglas, but did not dare discuss it aloud.

898. **pennons brown.** Dark wings.

CANTO SIXTH

3. **caitiff.** A poor wretch who must toil for his living.

4. **sad inheritance.** See *Genesis* ii. 19.

15. **gyve.** Chains, shackles. It is only of recent years that imprisonment for debt has been abolished.

24. **Court of Guard.** The guard-room of the castle, the place where the soldiers gathered during their leisure.

27. **comfortless alliance.** The blending of the light of the torches with that of the sun made a dreary, unpleasant light, made more dismal by the smoke.

35. **beakers.** Large drinking cups.

42. **harness.** Armour.

43. **for their fields.** As rent for their farms, being tenants of the Lord of the Manor.

45. **patriarchal claim.** In the Highlands the chief was regarded as the father of his clan, and the members of the clan were bound to render him the obedience of son to father.

48. **by battle.** They were mercenary soldiers.

53. **Fleming.** A native of Flanders, the soil of which was of extreme fertility.

60. **halbert.** A weapon consisting of a long staff to which an axe with a spear-like point was attached.

63. **holytide.** Holiday.

75. **burden.** Accompaniment, chorus.

81. **In host.** In war.

85. **marred.** Interrupted by his shouting the players at dice.

86. **Renew the bowl.** Fill up the beakers with liquor.

87. **merry catch I troll.** A merry song I sing.

90. **Poule.** Paul.

92. **black-jack.** A leather beer-jug.

93. **seven deadly sins.** Pride, anger, covetousness, lust, gluttony, envy, and sloth.

93. **sack.** A kind of wine.

95. **upsees out.** In the Dutch fashion. The words imply intoxication.

95. **a fig for.** An exclamation of contempt.

98. **Beelzebub.** One of the chief spirits of evil, the god of the Philistines.

99. **Apollyon.** The angel of the bottomless pit. See *Revelation* ix, 11.

103. **dues of his cure.** Revenue of his office.

107. **for the vicar.** This song adds nothing to the poem and might have been omitted without loss. Jeffrey points out that "the greatest blemish in the poem is the ribaldry and dull vulgarity which is put into the mouths of the soldiery in the guard-room."

124. **store of blood.** Much blood.

129. **glee-maiden.** Frequently, in these times, the minstrel was accompanied by a glee maiden, who sang and danced, and by an ape, who furnished amusement to the crowd.

136. **purvey.** Supply.

144. **his fee.** His share of the deer.

170. **Needwood.** One of the Royal forests. It was unlawful to kill a deer in such a forest.

182, a **gallant young.** A gallant youth.

183. **Tullibardine.** The family seat of the Murrays, about 20 miles from Stirling.

199. **errant damosel.** Wandering maiden. It was customary for a maiden who had suffered wrong to seek for some knight to champion her cause.

200. **high quest.** Important enterprise.

221. **hest.** Request.

234. **barret cap.** A flat, cloth cap.

254. **board.** Table.

277. **wheel.** An instrument of torture. The victim was bound to a wheel while his limbs were being broken.

278. **engine.** Implement of torture.

295. **Leech.** Physician.

306. **prore.** Prow.

337. **goodly bough.** Clan-Alpine has not been conquered, though many of the clansmen have been killed.

347. **Dermid's race.** The Clan Campbell, the hereditary enemies of the Macgregors.

377. **eyry.** Nest.

392. **dagger-crest.** The crest of Mar is a right hand holding a dagger.

403. **twilight forest.** The lances were so thick that they resembled a dark forest.

404. **barded.** Covered with defensive armour.

405. **battalia.** Army ready for battle.

414. **vaward.** In the vanguard.

430. **banner-cry.** Call to rally to the banner.

434. **their flight they ply.** They hasten their flight.

452. **Tinchel.** Scott says: "A circle of sportsmen who, by surrounding a great space and gradually narrowing, brought immense quantities of deer together, who usually made desperate efforts to break through the Tinchel."

478. **lightsome.** "They cleared their front in gay spirit."

483. **refluent.** Flowing back through the fearful pass.

496. **doubling.** Winding.
539. **bonnet-pieces.** Gold coins, having the King's head with a Scottish bonnet instead of a crown.
542. **lightly.** Quickly.
545. **casque and corselet.** Helmet and body armour.
565. **widowed dame.** See Canto III., lines 528 ff.
576. **elemental rage.** The raging thunder-storm.
626. **mortal stage.** The stage of life.
638. **storied pane.** Stained to represent scenes in history.
646. **better omen.** Better prospect of happiness.
664. **latticed.** Having a grated window.
665. **perch and hood.** Sitting blindfolded on its perch; that is, tired of doing nothing.
678. **vespers.** Evening prayers.
707. **morning prime.** Early in the morning.
723. **staid.** Supported.
726. **presence.** The presence, or audience chamber.
729. **princely port.** Men of princely carriage.
769. **infidel.** Doubter.
782. **proselyte.** Convert. The King has converted her unbelief into reality.
802. **talisman.** Magic charm.
837. **fetters and warder.** Chains and a keeper.
848. **numbers.** Music.
850. **housing.** Returning homeward.
861. **seraph.** An angel of the highest order in Heaven.
868. **fare thee well.** As Scott in the beginning desired the inspiration of the minstrels of old, now, his task done, he bids that inspiration farewell.



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